

TOWARDS AN EXPLICATION AND
DESCRIPTION OF SYNONYMY IN ENGLISH

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and of my own execution and authorship.

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ABSTRACT

The thesis begins by arguing for an a posteriori approach to synonymy, according to which synonymy should be treated as an empirical phenomenon which it is the task of linguistic semantics to explicate. Arguments are presented against the a priori approach often underlying treatments of synonymy, which makes it possible to define synonymy out of existence. A distinction is then drawn between three possible levels of synonymy (i.e. lexeme-synonymy, sense-synonymy and occurrence-synonymy), and it is argued that all three should be treated as legitimate levels - occurrence-synonymy as the basic level and the other two chiefly as a means of stating synonymy-relations more economically, where appropriate. This is followed by the establishment of two criteria of synonymy for all three levels. After discussion and (in some cases) re-definition of various types of acceptability and anomaly, the interchangeability criterion is defined as the mutual substitutability of words without causing either grammatical or collocational anomaly. The sameness of meaning criterion is based on the distinctions between pragmatic and analytic equivalence and between performance and judgement equivalence, and is defined in terms of the first alternative in each case. While my concern up to this point is with the explication of synonymy, the remainder of the thesis is devoted to its description. A distinction is drawn between two types of case where two senses are synonymous in some contexts but not in others. Two types of explanation are provided accordingly. The thesis ends by discussing various types of communicatively relevant difference between synonyms.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: GENERAL AIMS AND THEORETICAL PRELIMINARIES

1.1. General aim

The general aim of the present study is to try and clarify, systematically and fairly comprehensively, certain questions concerning the definition (and explication) and description of synonymy as a phenomenon in everyday communication in the English language (the exact import of 'in everyday communication' will be explained in 1.2). Thus, when such terms as 'language' and 'native speakers' are used in what follows, they are generally to be taken as pertaining to English. However, although this study is specifically devoted to English and although its results are entirely based on data drawn from English, there is some reason to believe that some of these results may apply more generally. But this is only a belief and hope, and the results of the present study stand or fall with reference to English alone.

By undertaking such a study, I am implicitly committed to three claims: (1) that synonymy (in a sense yet to be spelt out) exists as a phenomenon in everyday communication in English (and hence has some psychological reality for speakers of the language); (2) that synonymy (as such a phenomenon) is worth investigating; and (3) that synonymy (as such a phenomenon) has not yet been thoroughly investigated.

It will be my concern in the remainder of this chapter to substantiate these three claims by way of preparing the ground for the subsequent investigation. Once this has been done, the more specific aims of the present study will emerge at the end of this chapter.

1.2. Synonymy exists as an empirical phenomenon in English

In the literature on the subject, particularly in the philosophical literature, one often comes across conclusions to the

effect that, or characterizations of synonymy from which it can be inferred that, synonymy does not exist in natural language. According to Goodman, to cite only one example, "if difference of meaning is explained in the way I have proposed, then no two different words have the same meaning" (1949: 6).

Now as a matter of straightforward reasoning, it is only possible to deny the existence of synonymy as a phenomenon in natural language if one adopts what may be called an a priori procedure, whereby one establishes criteria of synonymy first and then applies these preconceived criteria to natural language to determine whether there are in fact expressions which satisfy these criteria (see p.11 on the difference between 'synonymy' and 'synonymity'). I have found such a procedure to be fairly characteristic of philosophical treatments of synonymy. Here, for example, is a revealing statement by Mates:

It is important to observe that this very research could hardly be carried out unless we possessed in advance a sufficiently precise characterization of synonymy to enable us to decide under what conditions we would regard two expressions as synonymous for a given person (1969: 548).

In fact, it seems that philosophers seldom go beyond these criteria and apply them to natural language in earnest. On the rare occasions when they have done so, they have usually been led, as in the case of Goodman, to the conclusion that there are no synonyms in natural language - that is, under such criteria as have been set up beforehand.

It seems to me that to a greater or lesser extent linguists have tended to follow essentially the same a priori procedure, moving from preconceived criteria to natural language data. Such a procedure, for example, is reflected in the following observations by Harris:

It is important to distinguish at the outset between two related but separate issues: (i) whether or not any language could have expressions differing in form but not in meaning, and (ii) whether or not any language does have expressions differing in form but not in meaning. The former is a matter of relations between definitions, i.e. the only sense in which no language could have expressions differing in form but not in meaning would be if we chose to define 'form' and 'meaning' in such a way that it followed from our definitions that any statement to the effect that expressions a and b differed in form but not in meaning would be self-contradictory. If, on

the other hand, we do not so define 'form' and 'meaning' the possibility is open that any language may have expressions differing in form but not in meaning. The question whether any language does have such expressions is a subordinate question, in that whether it arises at all depends on the answer propounded to the question of definitions (1973: 5; cf. also Harris, 1973: 27).

Given this procedure, it is not surprising that some linguists - such as Bloomfield (cf. Bloomfield, 1935: 145; Harris, 1973: 6-7), Nida (cf. Harris, 1973: 14; Lyons, 1963: 52-3), and Ullmann (cf. Ullmann, 1957: 108-9), though not Harris himself - have ended up drawing the conclusion that natural language has no room for the phenomenon of synonymy (or total synonymy).

Although, as we have just seen, the denial of the existence of synonymy as a phenomenon in natural language entails the adoption of an a priori procedure, the converse does not hold. For it is perfectly possible, again as a matter of straightforward reasoning, for preconceived criteria of synonymy to be satisfied by expressions subsequently to be found in natural language. Thus, on its own, the procedure whereby synonymy criteria are set up prior to the investigation of natural language does not necessarily rule out the existence of synonymy in natural language, but instead leaves open the question whether there are synonyms in natural language and, in so doing, makes a negative answer possible. Whether or not a negative answer is in fact reached depends, therefore, on the actual criteria worked out in this a priori approach.

Within the a priori approach, there have generally been, as Lyons has pinpointed (1963: 74), two assumptions, invoked separately or together, on the basis of which synonymy has actually been defined out of existence. One assumption is that to qualify as synonyms two expressions must be identical not only in cognitive meaning but also in such other respects as have customarily been subsumed under the vague, all-embracing rubric of 'connotative' meaning. This assumption is now generally regarded as unjustified. The same, however, cannot be said of the other assumption, namely, that two expressions cannot be treated as synonymous in one context unless they are synonymous in all contexts. Lyons (1963; 1968) has furnished a number of cogent arguments against this assumption, to which I will in the course of the present study add some further arguments of my own.

While following Lyons in rejecting these two assumptions, I will also take the more radical step of rejecting the underlying a priori approach as such for any linguistic treatment of synonymy. In fact, I reject the a priori approach regardless of the fact that it can give rise, and has given rise, to criteria which rule out the existence of synonymy in natural language. My ground for such an outright rejection is that synonymy is (best conceived as) an empirical phenomenon, whose existence is therefore given and not open to question.

To prove that synonymy exists as an empirical phenomenon in everyday communication in natural language, it is sufficient to show, first, that a certain phenomenon exists in natural language and, second, that it is in accordance with the condition of material adequacy (cf. Lyons, 1963: 5-7; Naess, 1957) to describe this phenomenon by means of the term 'synonymy'. Methodologically we may assume a prior criterion of synonymy and try to determine, first, whether this criterion permits the identification of a certain phenomenon in natural language and second, whether, if a certain phenomenon is thus identified, it can be described as 'synonymy' without breaching the condition of material adequacy.

The criterion I have in mind (to be elaborated later) is roughly as follows:

In a given sentence used in a given context, two expressions are synonymous in the sentence if and only if they are sufficiently similar in meaning and other possibly relevant respects to be interchangeable in that sentence and to help convey what would pass for the same meaning in the context in question by the standard of actual everyday communication.

Note that this criterion differs from certain widely held criteria, in that it does not insist on the unconditional total absence of difference in cognitive meaning, let alone non-cognitive meaning, as a necessary condition of synonymy.

Under this assumed criterion, synonymy is not only permitted but is a very widespread phenomenon indeed. As a simple illustration, give any normal literate native speaker of English a sufficiently long (say two hundred words) piece of normal English text, and he will be able, while keeping the structure of the sentences unchanged, to replace many words or expressions in the text with different words or expressions without either making the sentences in question awkward or distorting the meaning of the sentences as they are used

in the text.

Nor need this be a hypothetical situation. To appreciate this, one needs only to realize that a great deal of our language activity amounts to, or consists in, recounting what we have heard or read. In the course of our everyday use of language, we convey messages, retell stories, pass on information and engage in countless other similar activities. In all these activities it is extremely common for us to use different words to express what in everyday communication is taken to be the same meaning. In so doing, we have plenty of room, as it were, for linguistic manoeuvre before we become open to the charge of misrepresentation. It is true that the use of different words is often accompanied by the use of different sentence structures, but (1) this is not invariably the case and (2) when this is the case it is not invariably necessary. To the extent of (1) and (2), the use of different words to express the same meaning constitutes evidence, under our assumed criterion, of the phenomenon of synonymy as it manifests itself in everyday communication. Similar evidence is also available in the shape of other facts, which it is not necessary to go into.

But even if the phenomenon of synonymy was not manifested in everyday communication, this would constitute no proof that the phenomenon of synonymy does not exist under our assumed criterion. For what ultimately matters in the present connection is not the actuality but the potentiality of synonym substitution; and, as our earlier, hypothetical, illustration shows, the potentiality of synonym substitution is clearly present in a natural language such as English.

Now that we have shown that our assumed criterion is not open to objection on the ground of not permitting the phenomenon of synonymy in natural language, we may turn to other grounds on which our assumed criterion may be open to objection. But first it is as well to point out that our assumed criterion is in fact one which has been arrived at in an effort to explicate synonymy as a phenomenon in everyday communication in natural language and is one which, once it has been further elaborated and slightly modified (as regards interchangeability), will be adopted in the present study. There is thus all the more reason to make sure that this criterion is free from objection.

The grounds on which our criterion may be found objectionable are essentially two, of which one bears on the question whether the phenomenon of synonymy exists in natural language, while the other does not.

Let us deal with the latter possible ground for objection first, namely, that our criterion is such as to leave out certain cases which ought to be included within the phenomenon of synonymy. Among these, in fact, would be many words and expressions which have been treated as synonyms by linguists, psychologists and, particularly, lexicographers and synonymists (i.e. compilers of 'dictionaries of synonyms'). As an answer to this objection, it will suffice to make it clear that I am far from pretending that what is circumscribed by my criterion as the object of the present study constitutes the entire phenomenon of synonymy (in English). Once this point has been made clear, it only remains to show that it is part of what it is in accordance with the condition of material adequacy to refer to as the phenomenon of synonymy. This brings us to the other ground on which our criterion may be found objectionable.

On this other ground it may be questioned whether, in treating what this criterion identifies as the phenomenon of synonymy, we have not stretched the term 'synonymy' to such an extent that we are in breach of the condition of material adequacy. The answer to this question clearly bears on our original question as to whether synonymy exists as an empirical phenomenon in natural language. For if the answer is in the affirmative, we cannot claim to have demonstrated the existence of synonymy in natural language as opposed to something which we are merely wrongly referring to as 'synonymy'.

In meeting this potential objection concerning material adequacy, the first thing to note is that as a matter of established usage the term 'synonymy' and its cognates have been employed to designate phenomena of varying scopes - that is, by people who do not dispute the existence of synonyms. Without going into subtleties, it will suffice for our present purpose to mention two well-established ways of employing the term 'synonymy' and its cognates.

The first is more or less characteristic of the practice of synonymists and lexicographers. The following definition, taken from Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms (henceforth to be referred to as Webster), may serve as a good example:

A synonym, in this dictionary, will always mean one of two or more words in the English language which have the same or very nearly the same essential meaning (p. 24a).

The second, equally well-established, is typically to be found in the practice of certain linguists. A good example is provided by Crystal, according to whom:

Synonymy can be said to occur if items are close enough in their meaning to allow a choice to be made between them in some contexts, without there being any difference for the meaning of the sentence as a whole (1980: 345).

Given that these two definitions represent well-established ways of employing the term 'synonymy' and its cognates, for the purpose of demonstrating the material adequacy of our criterion of synonymy it will be sufficient to demonstrate its affinity to one or both of the above two definitions, and this we can do by simply placing it side by side with the latter.

While their affinity is obvious, it is equally obvious that the two definitions quoted above differ from each other and that our criterion differs in turn from both. Broadly speaking, the two definitions differ from each other in that the first, unlike the second, insists neither on interchangeability nor on the total absence of difference in meaning. To this extent, the first definition imposes a less strict criterion than the second. The second definition, on the other hand, further differs from the first in that, instead of treating synonymy independently of sentence and context as the first definition does, it treats synonymy as sentence- and context-bound, whereby for two expressions to be synonymous in one sentence and context it is not necessary for them to be synonymous in other sentences and contexts. In this respect, the second definition imposes a less strict criterion than the first.

Of these two definitions, our criterion is obviously closer to the second than to the first. However, it differs from the second definition (if this is construed in a certain way) in an important yet subtle respect. By way of clarifying what is meant by 'in everyday communication', we must now look into this difference. Our definition, it will be recalled, does not insist on the unconditional total absence of difference in cognitive meaning as a necessary condition of synonymy. That this is so is reflected in the following words in our criterion, namely, "to help convey what would pass for the same meaning in the context in question by the standard

of everyday communication". These words imply that for two expressions to help convey the same meaning in a sentence and context by the standard of everyday communication is not the same as for two expressions to help convey the same meaning in a sentence and context by the standard of close, leisurely examination. Consequently, expressions which would count as synonyms in the one case may well fail to do so in the other. Here our criterion leans somewhat in the direction of the Webster definition, to the extent that the latter contains the words "very nearly the same ... meaning".

It is not absolutely clear how Crystal's definition is intended to be construed in this regard, though on the face of it Crystal seems to be insisting on the total absence of difference in cognitive meaning as a necessary condition of synonymy when he says "... without there being any difference for the meaning of the sentence as a whole". But "without there being any difference" by what standard? If the intended standard is that of close, leisurely examination, then Crystal's definition clearly imposes a stricter criterion than ours, and it must be said of it that it does not explicate synonymy as an empirical phenomenon in everyday communication. If, on the other hand, the intended circumstances consist in the standard of everyday communication, then Crystal's definition imposes roughly the same criterion as ours, but in this case it must be said of it that it is rather misleading.

In fact, I feel that Crystal and those subscribing to essentially the same definition seem to want to have the best of both worlds. On the one hand, they seem to deliberately insist on the unconditional absence of difference in cognitive meaning. On the other hand, their actual examples of synonyms (such as 'range' and 'selection' in 'What a nice _____ of flowers', instanced by Crystal) lead one to infer that the standard of everyday communication is in fact what they have in mind, for otherwise what they have singled out as examples of synonyms and as their chosen explicanda would not count as synonyms.

It is important that such ambivalence should give way to a definite choice between the two different interpretations. I think that if Crystal and others could be persuaded to concede the point being made here, they would probably say that what they have in

mind is indeed the standard of everyday communication and so choose the weaker interpretation. Whether they would do so or not, this is how our criterion is to be construed.

It may be asked, of course, whether what is permitted by the weaker interpretation but excluded by the stronger interpretation should not be referred to with some such term as 'near-synonymy', given that two degrees of synonymy are already apparent, of which the one corresponding to the weaker interpretation is the less strict. The answer is 'No'. I am aware that there are many points of view, degree of synonymy being one, from which the phenomenon of synonymy identified by our criterion may be divided into sub-phenomena. I will take up some of these points of view in the course of the present study. However, there is an important sense in which the the phenomenon identified by our criterion is homogeneous: by the standard of everyday communication, which is what is taken to be important in the present study, all that falls within its range counts as sameness of meaning. For this reason, the entire phenomenon will be referred to as 'synonymy' without qualifications.

Not only is our criterion materially adequate by virtue of its affinity to well-established ways of employing the term 'synonymy' and its cognates on the part of synonymists and linguists, its claim to material adequacy is also based on its correspondence to the way in which the term and its cognates are employed by lay native speakers. To prove this, let us revert to the hypothetical illustration used earlier. All we have to do now is to phrase it in a slightly different way, as follows: Give any normal literate adult native speaker of English who knows the term 'synonymous' a sufficiently long (say two hundred words) piece of English text, and he will be able, while keeping the structure of the sentences unchanged, to replace many words or expressions in the text with what he considers to be 'synonymous' words or expressions. Then a careful look will reveal that at least some of the 'synonymous' words or expressions that have been produced in this way help to convey what would pass for the same meaning only by the standard of everyday communication, and not by the standard of close, leisurely examination.

In fact, similar proof of the material adequacy of our criterion

can also be found in the way in which the term 'synonym' and its cognates are sometimes employed by linguists, as when they give examples of synonyms, such as 'range' and 'selection', which are subject to the same analysis that we have just seen applies to examples of synonyms provided by lay native speakers.

Having, I think, demonstrated the existence of synonymy as a phenomenon in everyday communication in a natural language like English, I do not deny that there may be good reasons for philosophical treatments not to be concerned, or primarily concerned, with what I have been referring to as the empirical phenomenon of synonymy, conceived in whatever scope. But then this is because philosophers engage in the study of synonymy largely, though not exclusively, in order to solve philosophical problems. Owing to the nature of their interest, it may be perfectly justifiable, in some cases, for philosophers to adopt an a priori approach despite the existence of synonymy as an empirical phenomenon.

Whether or not this is so, I can see no reason, particularly given the existence of synonymy as an empirical phenomenon, for linguistic studies of synonymy to be conducted in an a priori spirit. For from the point of view of linguistic semantics, there seems to be little point in trying at length to define something that does not or may not exist, that bears or may bear no relation to the facts of natural language. To this extent, the a priori procedure is clearly misguided; even if and when such a procedure does not actually rule out synonyms in natural language, it is still to be rejected for putting the cart before the horse. Instead of moving from preconceived criteria of synonymy to natural language data, it is more in keeping with the nature of linguistic semantics to adopt the opposite, a posteriori, approach, whereby we start by taking the phenomenon of synonymy as given and then try to explicate it by setting up criteria of synonymy. Briefly then, the a priori approach consists in saying: Let us define synonymy as such-and-such a meaning-relation; does it exist? The a posteriori approach, on the other hand, consists in saying: Synonymy exists, e.g. ...; what sort of meaning-relation is it?

It is true that once we have worked out such criteria of synonymy it will be necessary to apply them to natural language data.

But in doing this our aim will be not to determine whether there are synonyms in natural language but to check the adequacy of synonymy criteria against empirical data whose existence has already been established. If no synonyms are allowed under such criteria, we are not to conclude that natural language contains no synonyms but only to infer that the criteria themselves are inadequate.

So far I have used both 'synonymy' and 'synonymity' in referring to sameness of meaning. As I use these terms, they are not in free variation. By way of underlining the distinction between the a priori and the a posteriori approaches to synonymy, it may be helpful now to spell out in what way I see the two terms as different.

To begin with, both 'synonymy' and 'synonymity' denote the relation of sameness of meaning, with 'synonyms' denoting the expressions that enter into this relation. The difference between 'synonymy' and 'synonymity' lies in the way in which the relation of sameness of meaning is to be construed in each case: 'synonymy' denotes the relation of sameness of meaning as a phenomenon or fact, whereas 'synonymity' denotes the relation of sameness of meaning as a property or concept. As a phenomenon, synonymy embodies numerous characteristics or features, of which the essential or defining ones make up the property of synonymity. It is clear, then, that synonymy entails synonymity, but not conversely. For it is possible for there to be a property without there being a corresponding phenomenon, whereas it is not possible for there to be a phenomenon without there being a corresponding property, difficult though it may be to extract the latter from the former. (I have, incidentally, also used 'synonymy' as a cover-term for the fact and the property of being synonymous.)

In the light of the difference between the two terms, we may now characterize the a priori and the a posteriori approaches respectively in the following way. The a priori approach takes the property of synonymity as its point of departure, thus leaving it open whether there is the corresponding phenomenon of synonymy. The a posteriori approach, on the other hand, takes the phenomenon of synonymy as its point of departure and then explicates it by trying to arrive at the corresponding property of synonymity. From this point onward I will for the most part use only 'synonymy', as

it will be clear in each case from the context whether it is the phenomenon that is in question or the property, or both.

I hope to have shown that synonymy exists as an empirical phenomenon in everyday communication in natural language and that, given this, linguistic treatments of the subject should, accordingly, be of an empirical rather than fundamentally conceptual character. This, at least, is the premise on which I intend to proceed in the present study.

1.3. Why synonymy is worth investigating

There are various points of view from which the question of synonymy has been found worthy of investigation. But broadly speaking, studies that have been undertaken on the subject can be seen as falling into two types.

To the first type belong those treatments in which synonymy is studied not for its own sake but for some other purpose. In linguistic philosophy, for example, we find numerous treatments of synonymy with a view to elucidating the concept of analytic truth (cf. Cooper, 1973a: 161; Olds, 1956: 473-4). Another example comes from the field of psychology, where synonymy has been used to throw light on the mode of sentence memory (cf. Brewer, 1975).

The second type consists of treatments where synonymy is studied for its own sake, as something intrinsically worthy of investigation. In the linguistic literature, the question of synonymy has sometimes been raised in the context of other linguistic concerns, for example phonology (cf. Harris, 1973: 21). Here we have a situation where synonymy is approached as a problem bearing on linguistic (as opposed to philosophical or psychological) matters, but not for its own sake. However, with the exception of such studies, treatments of synonymy in the linguistic literature belong predominantly to the second type, where they ought to belong.

The present study belongs also to the second type, in that it is concerned with the question of synonymy for its own sake.

There is, however, a further complication, in that cutting across this dichotomy is another dichotomy, already discussed in the last section, which consists in the distinction between the a priori

approach and the a posteriori approach.

As we have already stated, the approach followed in the present study is of the a posteriori type, where the object of investigation is synonymy as an empirical phenomenon (in English).

Put in this way, the object of our investigation is still not specific enough. For, again as we have seen in the last section, the phenomenon of synonymy may be conceived, in yet a further dichotomy, either as something conforming to some absolute standard or as something conforming to the standard of everyday communication.

As we have seen, it is the second way of conceiving the phenomenon of synonymy that we will adopt in the present study.

Now that we have spelt out our position on each of the three dichotomies, we may formulate the general nature and aim of the present study thus: to study synonymy (1) for its own sake (2) as an empirical phenomenon (in English) (3) in actual everyday communication.

And, having formulated the general nature and aim of the present study in this way, I believe it would be superfluous to argue that the question of synonymy (as we conceive it) is worth investigating.

1.4. The need for further research

Let us begin by distinguishing two questions, of which the first is "What are synonyms?" and the second is "How do synonyms behave?". The first question requires as an answer a definition (and explication) of synonymy, while an answer to the second question will constitute a description of synonymy. It is clear that an answer to the second question depends on a prior answer to the first. For a description of synonymy presupposes some prior definition of synonymy, though not necessarily a precise one, which will serve to identify and delimit the data for description.

There is a tendency for treatments of synonymy, particularly in the philosophical literature, but also in the linguistic literature, to be concerned solely with definition. In the case of linguistic philosophy, this is perfectly understandable, since there the

subject is studied not for its own sake but in order to shed light on philosophical problems. This exclusive concern with definition is also perfectly understandable in the case of the philosophy of language. For although there synonymy is studied for its own sake, the aim is confined to explicating or clarifying synonymy as an existing concept.

In the case of the linguistic study of synonymy for its own sake, however, it is clearly not enough simply to work out a definition. Instead, a complete account should also include a description.

In this connection, a rough analogy with, say, the study of verbs may be helpful. When one's aim is to study verbs for their own sake, one will clearly not be content simply to have a definition of verbs - in other words, simply to know what sort of things verbs are. Imagine how absurd it would be for a book purporting to be a full account of verbs to provide only a definition, however elaborate and profound it might be. A full account of verbs, I think everyone will agree, must contain a description of how verbs behave. Essentially the same, it seems to me, applies to the study of synonyms, though with certain qualifications which I will mention later.

At this point, however, the analogy breaks down, as we notice an important difference between the two cases. In the case of the study of verbs, it is clear and agreed what sort of things verbs are, insofar as verbs can be identified without controversy. There is thus little need to work out a definition of verbs if our aim is to describe how verbs behave. The same, however, cannot be said of synonyms, regarding whose identity controversy abounds. It is thus a prerequisite to set up a definition of synonymy by way of identifying the phenomenon to be described before we are able properly to proceed with the task of description.

As far as the definition of synonymy is concerned, although numerous attempts have been made, there exists no definition that is embraced universally and without reservations. This is not surprising, given the fundamental difference between the a priori approach and the a posteriori approach. But even quite apart from this, a number of important questions remain unresolved. Before I mention some of these, it is as well to point out that many

definitions that have been offered are, strictly speaking, not definitions but mere glosses, in that they are couched in terms which are themselves vague and in need of explication. For definitions of synonymy to count as adequate, such intuitively clear but operationally untestable terms as 'meaning' must, as a minimum, be reduced to some more objectively accessible terms of reference.

A kind of definition which commands wide support and which I think offers the best chance of success (with regard to both material and operational adequacy) is in terms of 'interchangeability' plus 'mutual entailment' (or 'bilateral implication'). It is along the lines of this kind of definition, broadly speaking, that I shall proceed in the present study. But even with this kind of definition certain difficulties or uncertainties remain. For example, should synonymy be seen as a context-free or as a context-bound meaning-relation? What exactly is meant by 'interchangeability'? And how exactly is 'mutual entailment' to be construed? Questions like these, which are important for a proper understanding of synonymy, have not been sufficiently discussed, or have not been thoroughly resolved, or have not even been clearly raised. As part of the present study I will try and make a small contribution to the search for a better solution to these and other related questions. From this contribution it is hoped that a clear and comprehensive definition of synonymy will emerge, which will serve as the basis for some subsequent work in the present study on the description of synonymy.

Of the studies so far carried out on synonymy, more seem to have been devoted to its definition than to its description. In the main, I think, there are two reasons for this. In the first place, as far as studies in the philosophical literature are concerned, we have already seen that the description of synonymy lies outside the proper concerns of both linguistic philosophy and the philosophy of language. In the second place, as far as studies in the linguistic literature are concerned, these are usually undertaken as part of (cognitive) semantics. If side by side with this we put the fact that the description of synonymy (over and above its definition and explication) is largely of a non-semantic character (see Chapter 8), it will be self-evident why, though integral to a full linguistic account of synonymy, the description of synonymy

has not received as much attention in the linguistic literature as might have been expected.

In view of this state of affairs, at least as much work requires to be done on the description of synonymy as on its definition. But there are a couple of more specific reasons why I consider this to be the case as far as the present study is concerned. The first reason derives from the dependence of description on definition. We have already seen that the nature and scope of a description of synonymy depends on the phenomenon that has been identified and delimited by a prior definition. Thus, if and when two persons differ in what they regard as synonyms, it is inevitable that at least part of what falls within the scope of description for one person will lie outside the scope of description for the other. This, I think, applies to what I conceive as the scope of description vis-à-vis the tacit conception underlying most other work on the description of synonymy. The kind of facts which in this way come more or less exclusively under my scope of description will thus receive treatment in the present study which they either have not received at all or have not received in sufficient depth or detail.

The second reason is to do with the fact that synonymy has tended to be studied, not as a heterogeneous phenomenon cutting across various fields, but in and as part of some larger or related field, such as semantics, stylistics (cf. Ullmann, 1964) or collocation. As a result, work carried out on the description of synonymy tends to be of a somewhat piecemeal character, insufficiently systematic or comprehensive; and what is lacking is a unifying perspective which brings together, and in so doing sheds greater light on, the diverse aspects of synonymy - semantic, syntactic, collocational and stylistic - which require description. In the present study an attempt will be made to go some way towards providing just such a perspective.

Thus, strictly speaking, the present study is not, as might be expected, of a purely semantic nature. The unifying point of view is not semantics, nor any other independent field, but the unified yet heterogeneous phenomenon of synonymy itself - in a sense similar to that in which the unifying point of view in a comprehensive study of verbs is the phenomenon of verbs itself.

1.5. More specific aims

We stated the general aim of the present study in 1.1. We are now in a position to give this general aim more substance by breaking it down into two more specific aims.

The first of these aims is to arrive at a systematic and comprehensive definition of synonymy. Let me point out here that I do not see much intrinsic value in a definition of synonymy as such. Rather, I regard a definition of synonymy as valuable, first, to the extent that it is successful in explicating synonymy as an empirical phenomenon, and synonymy as an intuitive notion. But a successful explication is bound to go beyond (and is here intended to go beyond) what is ordinarily understood as definition, thus shading into description. I regard a definition of synonymy as valuable, secondly, to the extent that it is successful in identifying and delimiting the phenomenon which will then become the object of description. In this the role of definition is important, even indispensable, but also only ancillary.

My second aim in the present study is to provide a systematic and comprehensive description of synonymy - over and above what description is already contained in the definition (as explication). Description being dependent on definition, the nature and scope of the description has not been specified in this introductory chapter and must remain obscure until a definition of synonymy is firmly established.

And it is to the task of definition and explication that we now turn.

Part One

Definition and Explication

CHAPTER 2

DEFINITION AS ELUCIDATION OF A FORMULA

To approach a definition of synonymy, I have found it helpful to start consciously from an abstract formula: $A = B$. A comprehensive and systematic elucidation of this formula would, in my view, constitute a complete definition and explication of synonymy. In such an elucidation our aim, to put it at its most general, is to arrive at a precise notion as to (1) what (kind of units) A and B stand for, and (2) what the equation sign stands for.

To be more specific, question (1) can, in turn, be divided into two sub-questions: (1a) what kind of syntactic units do A and B stand for? and (1b) what kind of lexical units do A and B stand for?

Question (1a) is a straightforward one. A more explicit way of putting it, to adopt a common view of the hierarchical structure of sentences, is simply: Is synonymy conceived as a meaning-relation between morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, or sentences, or all of these? In the literature on the subject synonymy is usually conceived as a meaning-relation between words, or as a meaning-relation concerning words and phrases subsumed indiscriminately under 'expressions', while sentence-synonymy (of various kinds) usually goes under the name of 'paraphrase'. In the present study synonymy is conceived primarily as a relation between words. I say 'primarily' because the scope of the present study occasionally extends to certain types of phrase which are excluded by the syntactic unit of word but which, from a purely lexical point of view, are on a par with words. Thus, a full answer to (1a) would be that synonymy is conceived in the present study as a meaning-relation between lexical items, within which our emphasis will be on words. In giving this answer we have obviously departed from the strictly syntactic nature of the question, but for our purpose this inconsistency is immaterial.

Question (1a) is uncontroversial, and the usefulness of an answer to it lies only in helping to delimit one's object of study, if such delimitation is intended, as it is in the present study. Thus, having provided an answer to it, I will not be further concerned with this question.

Once we have established the relevant syntactic unit as word (to be construed as "lexical items, but esp. words"), there immediately arises a further, much more complex question, which is in fact (1b), namely: What lexical units do A and B stand for? Perhaps 'lexical' is not a very appropriate epithet here, but what this question means will become clear presently.

The question arises as a result of two factors: polysemy on the one hand, and something of the type-token distinction on the other. When account is taken of polysemy, A and B may each stand for two different lexical units. In the first place, A and B may each stand for a lexeme, polysemous or otherwise. In the second place, A and B may each stand for all those occurrences of a lexeme which share one submeaning of that lexeme where two or more submeanings attach to it. I will refer to such a unit as a sense, which in the present study is a lexical unit and is therefore not to be confused with the standard use of 'sense' in linguistics to mean "meaning". If we now bring in the second factor, there emerges yet a third possibility. Thus, A and B may each stand for a particular occurrence of a sense or of a lexeme. This gives us, on the same syntactic level of word, three different possible lexical levels of synonymy, which we may refer to as lexeme-synonymy, sense-synonymy and occurrence-synonymy respectively. (I use 'word' for two purposes: first, for referring to the syntactic unit of word in contradistinction to phrase, sentence, etc., and secondly, as a convenient non-technical cover-term for lexeme, sense and occurrence.)

Thus, to be more explicit, question (1b) may now be rendered as: Is synonymy actually to be conceived as a meaning-relation between lexemes, senses, or occurrences, or all of these? This is a complex and controversial question, my answer to which I shall not give here but will provide in Chapters 3 and 4.

So far I have identified three lexical levels and three corresponding possible lexical levels of synonymy only in a very schematic way. I will try and clarify the exact nature of these levels in the next chapter. In the meantime it should be stressed that the distinction between lexemes and senses on the one hand and occurrences on the other is only like the distinction between types and tokens. This will become clear in the next chapter, where we shall see in particular that occurrences are not tokens.

We may now turn our attention to question (2), namely: What does the equation sign stand for? From various treatments of synonymy in the literature, particularly those by linguists and philosophers, it appears that the equation sign may stand roughly for one or more of three distinct but related conditions of synonymy:

- (2a) that A and B are interchangeable;
- (2b) that A and B have the same cognitive meaning;
- (2c) that A and B have the same connotative meaning
('connotative' being used here as a blanket term for
all aspects of meaning other than cognitive meaning).

These three conditions are not of equal weight. The general pattern is that when only one condition is regarded as necessary it is certain to be (2b); when two conditions are regarded as necessary there tends to be a conjunction of (2a) and (2b); only when all three conditions are regarded as necessary, is (2c) finally included. The number of conditions judged to be necessary is a measure of the 'strength' of the synonymy criterion imposed on A and B.

It seems that most definitions of synonymy (esp. those by linguists and philosophers) can be characterized by seeing which and how many of the conditions under (2) are considered necessary for 'A = B' to hold, and by seeing which lexical units under (1) - i.e. (1a) lexeme, (1b) sense, and (1c) occurrence - A and B are taken to be. To illustrate, here are three different definitions of synonymy:

Synonyms, in the narrowest sense, are separate words whose meaning, both denotation and connotation, is identical, so that one can always be substituted for the other without change in the effect of the sentence in which it is done (Modern English Usage: 611).

Two expressions are synonymous in a language L if and only if they may be interchanged in each sentence in L without altering the truth value of that sentence (Mates, 1969: 549).

If there is one or more environment in which two lexemes are substitutable for each other without any change in COGNITIVE meaning, then they are synonymous in that environment or those environments (Bennett, 1968: 158).

I have cited these definitions in descending order of strength: the first may be characterized in terms of (2a), (2b), (2c), and (1a) or (1b); the second in terms of (2a), (2b), and (1a) or (1b); and the third in terms of (2a), (2b) and (1c).

The identification of conditions of synonymy is helpful as far as it goes. However, the very conditions themselves are not as trans-

parent as they might appear, and they are not matched with precise, universally-agreed interpretations. Both as a result and as evidence of this, definitions of synonymy differ (or potentially differ in the case of non-explicated definitions) not only in the number of conditions they consist of, but also as regards the way in which the relevant conditions are intended to be construed. It is therefore not enough simply to name the conditions that make up one's definition: it is also necessary to provide clear interpretations, without which the conditions will remain vague and not very helpful.

As far as the number of conditions regarded as necessary in the present study is concerned, I follow a widespread practice in the linguistic and philosophical literature (which I do not consider it necessary to justify) in not regarding (2c), i.e. identical connotative meaning, as a necessary condition. There is thus no need for me to provide an interpretation for this condition. At the same time, I depart somewhat from a widespread practice in the linguistic and philosophical literature (for reasons which will become clear in Chapter 7) in not insisting on an absolutely clear-cut distinction between cognitive and connotative meaning. Subject to this qualification, I conceive synonymy as a matter of cognitive meaning.

At this point our remaining, and much more substantial, tasks concerning the definition and explication of synonymy are three: first, to decide which lexical units (i.e. lexeme, sense, or occurrence, or all of these) A and B should be conceived as standing for (question (1b)); secondly, to furnish a precise interpretation of 'being interchangeable' (condition (2a)); and, finally, to furnish a precise interpretation of 'having the same cognitive meaning' (condition (2b)). These three tasks will receive our attention in Chapters 3 and 4, 6, and 7 respectively.

CHAPTER 3

LEXICAL UNITS AND DEFINITION

3.1. Three levels of synonymy

In the last chapter we drew a threefold distinction between what we referred to as lexeme-synonymy, sense-synonymy and occurrence-synonymy. This distinction is more complex and problematic than it might appear at first sight, and we must examine the three individual levels more closely.

The threefold distinction between lexeme-synonymy, sense-synonymy and occurrence-synonymy is best viewed in the first instance as arising out of the conventional dictionary, where many identical forms are set up as separate entries, and where under most entries are listed a number of submeanings, sometimes further divided and even subdivided. In the course of elaborating the threefold distinction viewed in this way I hope to provide a useful background against which subsequently to examine and assess various approaches to synonymy as regards the nature of the lexical units involved. In particular, I hope to uncover certain problems which any approach to synonymy must avoid or overcome if it is to count as adequate.

In the context of the conventional dictionary, A and B can be given a wider or narrower scope. In the first place, A and B may each stand for a lexeme in the sense of an entire dictionary entry, polysemous or otherwise. This, we must note, presupposes the distinction between homonymy and polysemy. In the case of the conventional dictionary such a distinction is drawn in a somewhat informal and inconsistent manner. To qualify as adequate, any approach to synonymy which makes this presupposition must be equipped with a principled way of determining lexeme-identity.

In the second place, A and B may each stand for a single sense of a lexeme where more than one submeaning, each corresponding to a sense (as we employ the term 'sense'), is listed under its entry. Independently of the practice of lexicographers, we may define a sense as those occurrences of a polysemous lexeme sharing a submeaning of that lexeme which it is considered appropriate to enter into the lexicon. It is important to note that to conceive synonymy

as a meaning-relation between senses presupposes the notion of polysemy whereby the meaning of a lexeme is treated as divisible into a finite number of distinct submeanings. Here again the conventional dictionary is backed up neither by a theoretical justification of finite polysemy nor by any wholly systematic procedure for dividing the meaning of a lexeme into its various submeanings. To qualify as adequate, any approach to synonymy which relies on the concept of finite polysemy must be free from these objections.

Finally, if in addition to lexemes and senses we also bring in the distinction between these units on the one hand and their individual occurrences on the other, A and B may be given a yet narrower scope. That is, A and B may each stand for an individual occurrence of a lexeme or of a sense of a lexeme. We must now explain what kind of lexical unit an occurrence exactly is.

As we conceive it, every occurrence is embedded in a sentence (i.e. a text-sentence as defined in Lyons, 1977: 29-30), which is in turn actually or potentially embedded in a text (the limiting case being none) and a context-of-situation ('context' for short), actual or imagined. A context-of-situation is made up of all the features relevant to the understanding of the sentence. Of such features, two are an addresser on the one hand and one or more addressees on the other, with all that these roles involve, such as the encoding intention of the addresser and the decoding capacity or habits of the addressee(s). For convenience, however, I will treat addresser and addressee, not as components of a context-of-situation, but as separate factors. Thus every occurrence (1) is embedded in a sentence, (2) is embedded, via the sentence in which it is embedded, in a text, (3) is embedded, via the sentence and text in which it is embedded, in a context-of-situation, (4) implies an actual or imagined addresser, and (5) implies one or more actual or imagined addressees. Having distinguished these five components in the characterization of occurrence, I will for the most part in what follows idealize away (4) and (5) by postulating the commonly-invoked ideal or average speaker-listener. We are thus left with occurrence, sentence, text, and (the narrowed-down version of) context-of-situation; to these we must now give closer attention.

Contrary to what might appear to be the case, an occurrence is

not conceived here as a unique event; it is thus not to be equated with a token. Instead, each occurrence consists in, and stands for, the merging of unique (actual and potential) events (the limiting case being one unique event, i.e. a token) which are considered to be identical from a certain point of view, whatever it may be. In our case, needless to say, the point of view in question is synonymy. If, say (1) there is an A such that it stands for a set of unique events, $A^1, A^2 \dots A^n$, (2) there is a B such that it stands for a set of unique events, $B^1, B^2 \dots B^n$, and (3) A and B are synonymous, then for our purpose $A^1, A^2 \dots A^n$ may be regarded as identical and thus as instantiating a single occurrence, and the same applies to $B^1, B^2 \dots B^n$.

What has been said about the nature of occurrence applies equally to the nature of sentence, text, and context-of-situation. Thus a sentence S in which an occurrence under focus is embedded is conceived not as a unique event, but as consisting of a subset of all the (actual and potential) disambiguated sentences identical in form to S - that subset whose members are considered to be identical (in addition to formal identity) from a certain point of view. The point of view in our case is that of occurrence-synonymy. Likewise, a text is conceived not as a unique event, but as consisting in the merging of unique events which are considered to be identical from the relevant point of view, it being in our case that of occurrence-synonymy. And exactly the same is true of a context-of-situation.

When we say that every occurrence is embedded in a sentence and, via that sentence, in a text and context-of-situation, in each case the occurrence, the sentence, the text and the context-of-situation are co-extensive. From now on I will, where convenient, subsume the text and the context-of-situation under 'context'.

What I have just characterized may be called, for the time being, 'simplex occurrences'. To make the concept of occurrence more useful for our purpose, I will now extend it by introducing what may be called, for the time being, 'complex occurrences'. A complex occurrence consists in the merging of two or more simplex occurrences where the result of the merging does not qualify as a sense (see 4.6 for the conditions that a complex occurrence must meet to qualify as a sense). From now on I will talk about occurrences without distinguishing between simplex and complex ones.

This extension does not alter our original conception of occurrence as sentence-bound and context-bound. What we have to do, however, is to interpret 'sentence-bound' as being bound to one or more sentences and 'context-bound' as being bound to one or more contexts. When occurrence is conceived in this way, it has the advantage of almost infinite flexibility: we can identify an occurrence on any level of abstraction (down to and including the level of tokens) which suits our purpose, just as long as that level of abstraction is not lexeme or sense.

In view of our conception of occurrence, questions of whether two occurrences are synonymous should always be settled with reference to the corresponding sentence(s) and context(s). This, however, is a matter of principle, not a matter of method. As far as method is concerned, we need to take into account only what actually influences our answer as to whether two occurrences are synonymous. Thus, if two occurrences are synonymous or not synonymous in a sentence regardless of context, it will be methodologically desirable to leave context out of account. Similarly, if two occurrences are synonymous or not synonymous in an expression regardless of what sentence that expression is used in, it will be methodologically desirable to leave sentence out of account. If, on the other hand, two occurrences are synonymous only in a certain sentence or sentences, then sentence will have to be taken into account. Similarly, context will have to be taken into account if two occurrences are synonymous only in a certain context or contexts. This is how we shall proceed methodologically.

'Lexeme', 'sense' and 'occurrence', as we use these terms, denote (three different levels of) lexical units. Corresponding to these we may now postulate three different levels of lexical meaning: lexeme-meaning, sense-meaning and occurrence-meaning, which are paired with lexeme, sense and occurrence respectively. (While using lexeme and lexeme-meaning, occurrence and occurrence-meaning as they have been defined above, for convenience I will quite often use 'sense' both to refer to the lexical unit and to refer to the semantic unit. This will not cause uncertainty, since in each case it will be clear from the context whether what is in question is the lexical unit or the semantic unit, or both.) A lexeme consists in all the forms that instantiate it. Its meaning is what semantic

information all these forms have in common. A form is identifiable as instantiating a particular lexeme by virtue of its formal, syntactic and semantic properties. What has just been said about lexemes applies also to senses and occurrences, except that the identification of a form as instantiating an occurrence or, especially, a sense relies more heavily on the semantic properties of the form.

Having started with the simple formula of ' $A = B$ ', we have now arrived at three different interpretations of A and B , which we may represent as (1) $A^1 = B^1$, (2) $A^S = B^S$ and (3) $A^O = B^O$ respectively.

The relation which holds between occurrences and senses/lexemes and which holds between senses and lexemes may be seen as one of assignment. An occurrence is directly assignable either to a sense or to a lexeme, whereby we can say that A^O is an occurrence of A^S or A^1 ; a sense is directly assignable to a lexeme, whereby we can say that A^S is a sense of A^1 .

Given the assignment relation, it is possible to define occurrence-synonymy independently and then to define sense-synonymy and lexeme-synonymy derivatively through the assignment relation. Thus, for ' $A^O = B^O$ ' to hold, it is both necessary and sufficient that A and B fulfil the requisite conditions (i.e. ' $=$ ') in one sentence and context. For ' $A^S = B^S$ ' to hold, it is both necessary and sufficient that for each and every occurrence assignable to A^S there is assignable to B^S an occurrence which is synonymous with it, and vice versa. It follows that a single instance of ' $A^O \neq B^O$ ' between an occurrence assignable to A^S and an occurrence assignable to B^S constitutes sufficient proof that ' $A^S \neq B^S$ '. Lastly, for ' $A^1 = B^1$ ' to hold, it is both necessary and sufficient either (1) that for each and every occurrence assignable to A^1 there is assignable to B^1 an occurrence which is synonymous with it, and vice versa, or (2) that for each and every sense assignable to A^1 there is assignable to B^1 a sense which is synonymous with it, and vice versa. It follows that a single instance where either (1) ' $A^O = B^O$ ' is not the case between an occurrence assignable to A^1 and an occurrence assignable to B^1 or (2) ' $A^S = B^S$ ' is not the case between a sense assignable to A^1 and a sense assignable to B^1 constitutes sufficient proof that ' $A^1 \neq B^1$ '.

We have already uncovered two presuppositions underlying lexeme-

synonymy and sense-synonymy respectively. In the light of the last two paragraphs we can now formulate these presuppositions in a different and more direct way. In the case of lexeme-synonymy, the presupposition is that for each and every occurrence or sense we are able to determine whether it is an occurrence or a sense of a particular lexeme. For unless we are able to do this, we will not be in a position to say whether an instance of lack of occurrence-synonymy or lack of sense-synonymy constitutes evidence that two lexemes are not synonymous, in which case the conception of lexeme-synonymy cannot be judged adequate.

What sense-synonymy presupposes is that for each and every occurrence we are able to identify the sense to which it is assignable and, furthermore, to determine whether it should be assigned to an existing sense or be considered a novel use necessitating the setting up of a new sense. For unless we are able to do so, we will, as with lexeme-synonymy, not be in a position to say whether an instance of lack of occurrence-synonymy constitutes evidence that two senses are not synonymous, in which case the conception of sense-synonymy cannot be judged adequate.

The assignment of an occurrence or a sense to a lexeme is relatively straightforward, because the distinction between homonymy and polysemy is relatively easy to draw and, given the way this distinction is normally drawn, homonymy is a much rarer phenomenon than polysemy. The assignment of an occurrence to a sense, on the other hand, is fraught with complications. Therefore, before we accept any conception of sense-synonymy as adequate, we must first be satisfied that it is backed up by a satisfactory method for unequivocally assigning occurrences to senses.

We have been elucidating lexeme-synonymy, sense-synonymy and occurrence-synonymy with particular reference to the conventional dictionary. Now in the academic literature on the subject there are to be found close counterparts of all three of these conceptions of synonymy. I say 'close' (rather than 'identical') because in most cases the exact nature of lexeme-identity and sense-identity is not clearly spelt out either in the conventional dictionary or in the treatments of synonymy in the academic literature.

There are, however, also to be found in the literature treatments of synonymy (or latent treatments of synonymy, in the sense

of being deducible from general views of meaning) where the conception appears to be ambiguous as between lexeme-synonymy and sense-synonymy. Such treatments are characterized by the matching of one lexical unit with one and only one homogeneous meaning, so that there is no room for the distinction between lexeme-meaning and sense-meaning and hence no room for the distinction between lexeme-synonymy and sense-synonymy. This is, or may be, a reasonable way to proceed in dealing with idealized languages. In the case of a natural language like English, however, the matching of one lexical unit with one meaning does not solve, but only serves to conceal, the problems involved. To appreciate this, one only needs to disambiguate the treatments of synonymy in question. Once such treatments have been disambiguated, we shall find that their conception of synonymy is either close to lexeme-synonymy or close to sense-synonymy. If the former, then they rest on the same presupposition as we have found to underlie any explicit conception of lexeme-synonymy. If the latter, then they rest on the same presupposition as we have found to underlie any explicit conception of sense-synonymy. In either case, they are confronted with the need to justify one of these presuppositions. In the final analysis, then, every seemingly homogeneous conception of synonymy in a natural language like English is in fact a conception of lexeme-synonymy, sense-synonymy, or occurrence-synonymy.

Underlying these different conceptions of synonymy can be clearly detected two opposing views of meaning: on the one hand, the so-called 'autonomist' view, which attributes an independent status to lexical meaning; and, on the other hand, the so-called 'contextualist' view, which regards lexical meaning as deriving entirely from context. Expositions of these two opposing views do not always touch upon the question of synonymy, but, if conceptions of synonymy are to be derived from them, they clearly point in different directions. Lexeme-synonymy and sense-synonymy go naturally with the autonomist view of lexical meaning, while occurrence-synonymy springs equally naturally from the contextualist view of lexical meaning. I will deal with these two views of meaning in more detail later in this chapter and particularly in 10.4.

In view of their common theoretical basis it is not surprising that, where the distinction is recognized, lexeme-synonymy and

sense-synonymy are usually regarded as compatible (cf. Abraham & Kiefer, 1966: 33; Katz, 1972: 48; Baldinger, 1980: 217-8). Nor is it surprising, in view of their different theoretical underpinnings, that the conceptions of sense-synonymy and occurrence-synonymy have tended to be held by people who regard their own conception as incompatible with the other (cf. Lyons, 1963: 74; Ullmann, 1957: 108-9). This is particularly true of those who subscribe to sense-synonymy. Where no distinction is drawn between lexeme-synonymy and sense-synonymy, we may find treatments (or latent treatments) in which lexeme-synonymy or sense-synonymy is tacitly regarded as the only legitimate level of synonymy.

For the purpose of the following discussion, treatments of synonymy may be seen as falling into three categories as regards lexical units: (1) those in which lexeme-synonymy is treated as the only legitimate level of synonymy; (2) those in which sense-synonymy is treated as a legitimate level of synonymy, with or without also treating lexeme-synonymy as a legitimate level of synonymy; and (3) those in which occurrence-synonymy is treated as a legitimate level of synonymy, with or without also treating lexeme-synonymy and/or sense-synonymy as legitimate levels of synonymy. In the following three sections I will examine each of the three categories in turn, concentrating on lexeme-synonymy, sense-synonymy and occurrence-synonymy respectively.

3.2. Lexeme-synonymy

I have not come across any treatment of synonymy in which lexeme-synonymy is regarded as the only legitimate level of synonymy. There exists a view of lexical meaning, however, which, if a conception of synonymy is to be deduced from it, will lead to just such a treatment. This is the autonomist view of lexical meaning as it is held, for example, by Antal (1961) and Droste (1968).

Both Antal and Droste draw a distinction between meaning and denotation such that to any lexeme there corresponds only one, invariant, meaning which underlies all its occurrences. Within this view of meaning there is no room for polysemy, for a lexeme cannot have different submeanings but only different denotata.

Thus what for the conventional dictionary is a matter of multiple meaning is for Antal and Droste a matter of multiple denotata purely extralinguistic in character.

Antal cites Walpole's treatment of 'case' as an example where in his view meaning is confused with denotation. The following are among the sentences used by Walpole in this connection:

- (i) I thought he was in Mexico; but such was not the case.
- (ii) In this case the detective was completely baffled.
- (iii) If this was the case, why didn't you inform the police?
- (iv) "You have a very good case", said the lawyer.
- (v) What is the case of this pronoun?

Of these five occurrences of 'case', Antal confines himself to the first three, commenting that

The instances of case we have quoted are, in my opinion, completely identical in meaning, and this is precisely why we are justified in considering them the same morpheme as appearing in three different contexts.

We have just said that the three case-s are alike in form as well as in meaning. This is undeniably so. But this is not the same as saying that they are identical in every respect. However, it is not their meanings that differ, the difference exists between them in so far as each denotes something different in the concrete reality. The flaw in Walpole's whole argument is that he confounds meaning with what we have here called denotation Meaning - as stated above - is necessarily independent of context; that which is added from the context is not meaning but denotatum (1961: 218-9).

It so happens that the three occurrences of 'case' that Antal chooses to comment upon in support of the autonomist view of meaning are in fact assignable to the same sense in the average conventional dictionary, where the two occurrences in (iv) and (v) are assignable to two other senses respectively (cf. Collins English Dictionary (henceforth CED); Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (henceforth OALDCE)). It seems that Antal is equivocating somewhat here. For what we are not told is whether the occurrences of 'case' in (iv) and (v) are also instantiations of the same meaning.

If the answer is negative, then what is really eliminated is not the level of sense but the level of lexeme as these are distinguished in the conventional dictionary. On this interpretation, an approach to synonymy deriving from Antal's view of meaning would be faced with the same problems that, as we shall see later, beset

any approach to synonymy on the level of sense.

However, I think that, if pressed, Antal would probably give an answer in the affirmative. But even if this were so, it is not enough to state that

A particular morpheme has exactly the same meaning in all the various contexts, because when it has a different meaning we have to do not with the same but with a different morpheme (1961: 218).

For, as it stands, the statement is merely circular and therefore vacuous, unless we are furnished, which we are not, with a principled way of settling questions of sameness and difference of meaning regarding identical forms.

With a combination of theoretical pronouncements and exemplification, Droste leaves us in no doubt that in his theory there is no place for the conventional dictionary's level of sense. This is how he states his position:

In so far as forms are fixed and have no variants, the meanings of these forms have no variants either; variants in meaning are valid if and only if they are formally expressed. What is usually regarded as a variant of meaning is in fact a variant in the concept (the 'denotatum') to which meaning is related. These extra-linguistic variants are not recognizable within the direct and invariable relation form-meaning (1968: 128).

For illustration the word used is 'head' as it occurs in the following sentences:

- (vi) He has a terrible pain in his head.
- (vii) He is the head of the family.
- (viii) He is taller by a head.
- (ix) My head is in a whirl.
- (x) He has a good head for mathematics.

All the five occurrences of 'head', in Droste's view,

have exactly the same form and therefore, according to our assumptions, the meaning should be identical too. There really does not seem to be one indication which might lead to a differentiation within this meaning; on the contrary, the meaning of head in all the cases is 'head' (1968: 128).

In conventional dictionaries, however, the five occurrences of 'head' are assignable to four or five separate senses (cf. CED: senses 1, 4, 9, and 11 under the entry of 'head'; OALDCE: senses 1, 2, 4, 7, and 12 under the entry of 'head'). An even more striking example is that Droste treats 'light' (colour) and 'light'

(weight) as sharing one meaning, so that the difference between them is relegated to the extralinguistic level of denotation (1968: 130).

Although the level of sense is absent from Antal's and Droste's theory of lexical meaning, its absence does not result in a net loss in the descriptive power of the theory. For in its place is established the level of denotation. However, the difference between this level of denotation and the conventional dictionary's level of sense is not a mere matter of terminology. In the first place, there is a clear difference in their status. Those who speak of the level of sense obviously take it to be a legitimate level of meaning lower than but nevertheless not different in essence from lexeme-meaning: both constitute lexical meaning. In sharp contrast, those who hold an autonomist position like Antal's and Droste's regard the level of denotation as extralinguistic and hence fundamentally different from lexeme-meaning. Thus what the former would treat as sense-synonymy amounts in the eyes of the latter to merely denotational identity, which is presumably not worthy of the descriptive label 'synonymy'. What is more, given Antal's and Droste's position, it would not only be considered objectionable to talk about sense-synonymy, it would be impossible to do so. For on their autonomist view of meaning there is no distinction between the level of sense and the level of occurrence: both are conflated in the level of denotation. While the number of senses attaching to a lexeme is finite, there is no limit to the number of denotata that a lexeme can be used to designate.

It seems clear that from Antal's and Droste's autonomist view of meaning the following consequences will follow as regards synonymy. It is neither legitimate nor feasible to treat synonymy as a relation between senses. It is feasible but not legitimate to treat synonymy as a relation between occurrences. It is both legitimate and feasible only to treat synonymy as a relation between lexemes. We have already seen that two lexemes, A^1 and B^1 , are synonymous if and only if for each and every sense assignable to A^1 there is assignable to B^1 a sense which is synonymous with it, and vice versa. In practice, then, a conception of synonymy derived from Antal's and Droste's view of lexical meaning would have the following consequence in a hypothetical situation. Imagine the following facts. There is a lexeme one of whose senses has been established as

synonymous with 'light'(weight). However, there is no sense assignable to this lexeme which is synonymous with 'light'(colour). It follows then, simply from this second fact, that we are prevented from describing the first fact in terms of synonymy.

A conception of synonymy which regards lexeme as the only level on which synonymy is to be located if at all is open to challenge on at least three counts. In the first place, we may point to the fact that a clear definition of lexeme-identity is often lacking, as in the case of Antal and Droste (argument from lexeme-identity). However, this is a relatively minor objection, which we may henceforth ignore. More important are the following considerations. The first of these is that the autonomist view of meaning on which the exclusive lexeme conception of synonymy is based is itself open to challenge (argument from views of meaning). If the autonomist view of lexical meaning can be shown to be inadequate, the exclusive lexeme conception of synonymy must fall with it, particularly in view of the third ground on which this conception may be found objectionable. This is that the exclusive lexeme conception of synonymy is too strong and thus runs counter to what synonymy is normally understood to be (argument from material adequacy). If this is so, it must be rejected for failing to satisfy the condition of material adequacy.

I think that the last two objections are both valid and that they constitute sufficient grounds for rejecting the exclusive lexeme conception of synonymy. To substantiate the third objection, it is sufficient to show that the conception of synonymy as holding between senses or between occurrences is not too weak. I will try and show this later in this chapter; and I will substantiate the second objection in 10.4.

3.3. Sense-synonymy

It is on the level of sense that most definitions of synonymy are to be found. In such definitions, when A and B are said to be synonymous, synonymy is to be understood as the sharing of one rather than of all their senses if more than one sense is seen as attaching to A or B or both. The following are all examples of

sense-synonymy definitions, though they vary in explicitness.

Ullmann locates synonymy on the level of what corresponds to the conventional dictionary's sense. For him, polysemy is a matter of "one name with several senses" (1957: 114), while synonymy is defined in terms of "one sense (my underlining) with several names" (1957: 108). Therefore, when two (polysemous) lexemes are said to be synonymous (as in 1957: 108, penultimate line), what exactly is meant, if Ullmann is consistent, is that there is one sense from among the several senses of one lexeme which is synonymous with one sense from among the several senses of the other lexeme. However, little is done to justify the presuppositions underlying sense-synonymy.

Nida is even more explicit in treating synonymy as holding between senses rather than whole lexemes when the latter are considered to be polysemous, when he says:

Terms whose meanings overlap are generally called synonyms. Such terms are usually substitutable one for the other in at least certain contexts; but rarely, if ever, are two terms substitutable for each other in any and all contexts.

In most discussions of meaning, synonyms are treated as though the terms overlap, while in reality what is involved is the overlapping of particular meanings of such terms. When one says that peace and tranquillity are synonyms, what is really meant is that one of the meanings of peace, involving physical and/or psychological state of calm, overlaps the meaning of tranquillity, also involving physical and/or psychological calm. One is not at this point discussing the meaning of peace as the absence of war or the cessation of hostilities. This distinction becomes clear when one compares the common expression peace conference with the nonoccurring expression +tranquillity conference (1975: 98).

Various linguists have explicitly distinguished between what are essentially lexeme-synonymy and sense-synonymy, although the terminology they employ may be different or idiosyncratic. Generative-transformational linguists, for example, have formulated the distinction in terms of 'full synonymy' and 'i-ways synonymy', the limiting and perhaps typical case of the latter being one-way synonymy, where two polysemous lexical entries have only one sense or 'path' in common. Thus, for Katz:

Synonymy is the limiting case of semantic similarity: it is the case where two constituents are as similar as possible, where there is no difference in meaning between a sense of one and a sense of the other. Hence, the definition of 'synonymy' is as in (2.35) and of 'full synonymy'

as in (2.36):

(2.35) A constituent C_i is synonymous with another constituent C_j just in case they have a reading in common.

(2.36) A constituent C_i is fully synonymous with C_j just in case the set of readings assigned to C_i is identical to the set of readings assigned to C_j (1972: 48).

Abraham and Kiefer define synonymy in a very similar manner:

(i) We say that between two words, W_1 and W_2 , a full synonymy holds if, and only if, their trees have exactly the same branching structure (i.e. the same paths) and exactly the same labels on the corresponding nodes.

(ii) We say that between two words, W_1 and W_2 , an i -ways synonymy holds if, and only if, they have in their tree graphs i paths in common (1966: 33).

Employing a different terminological framework, Baldinger explicitly locates synonymy on two distinct levels: the 'level of the signifie' (i.e. lexeme) and the 'level of the sememe' (i.e. sense):

Heger's trapezium distinguishes, on the plane of the substance of content

signifie (brings together all the sememes linked to a moneme).

sememe (= 'meaning' in traditional terminology).

seme (= concept; system of semes = conceptual system).

If the signifie has but one sememe, signifie and sememe are identical; if, on the other hand, the signifie contains several sememes, it constitutes a semasiological field. As far as synonymy is concerned, this basic formulation allows us to distinguish between two kinds of synonymy on the plane of the substance of content:

A synonymy of two signifies (if the two signifies linked to two different monemes, contain but one sememe each ...).

A synonymy of two sememes which are linked by means of two complex signifies (which contain more than one sememe), to two different monemes

In this second case, the synonymy is produced, not on the level of the signifie, but on the level of the sememe (...). (1980: 217-8).

Further examples of sense-synonymy definitions can be found, but those already cited will suffice for our purpose of making a critical examination of sense-synonymy definitions in general. Before we comment on these sense-synonymy definitions, however, it is necessary to examine the level of sense as such in some detail.

It is generally agreed by those who regard sense as a legitimate level of meaning that the finite number of senses attaching to a polysemous lexeme are arrived at through abstraction from the lexeme's infinite variety of occurrences. To see this process at work, we may now look at a study of 'polysemy and the structure of the subjective lexicon' conducted by two psychologists,

Caramazza and Grober (1976).

In this study three levels of meaning of diminishing abstraction are distinguished, which are referred to as core meaning (i.e. lexeme-meaning), prototypical sense (i.e. sense-meaning) and sense-instance (i.e. occurrence-meaning). The authors' main aim is to show that there is a core meaning underlying the endless variety of sense-instances that a lexeme can acquire in context. Of more particular interest to our present concern, however, is the finding that between these two levels of meaning it is possible to establish in an empirical manner (i.e. through clustering and multidimensional scaling methods) a number of what are called prototypical senses. Thus, for the lexeme 'line' (conceived as cutting across parts of speech) twenty-six sense-instances are recognized, which are exemplified in an equal number of sentences (the numbering in what follows is Caramazza and Grober's):

- (1) Ford is coming out with a new line of hard tops.
- (2) I am no longer in that line of business.
- (3) He had come from a line of wealthy noblemen.
- (4) They came to two different conclusions using the same line of reasoning.
- (5) Sam owned the local bus line.
- (6) When the curtain rose for the second act, Bob could not recall his opening line.
- (7) She said it was a line from Keats.
- (8) He began to type the first line of his paper.
- (9) When you arrive in New York, please remember to drop me a line.
- (10) The tailor would line the coat with fur.
- (11) The rich man was able to line his pocket with money.
- (12) We wanted to line the street with people.
- (13) We were told to line up.
- (14) Line your paper for writing.
- (15) Sergeant Jones would bring him into line.
- (16) We built a fence along the property line.
- (17) There was no turning back; they had crossed the enemy line.
- (18) The children were playing in the direct line of fire.
- (19) The judge had to draw a line between right and wrong.
- (20) I pulled on the line with all my strength.
- (21) The workman broke through to the gas line.

- (22) The shortest distance between two points is a straight line.
- (23) We were told to draw a line under the title of the book.
- (24) When he frowned, a line formed across his forehead.
- (25) The road was flanked by a line of trees on either side.
- (26) As I examined the wall of the cave, I could clearly see a line of iron ore (Caramazza & Grober, 1976: 187).

Caramazza and Grober find, on the basis of evidence obtained from three experimental studies, that underlying all these diverse sense-instances there is a core meaning, which they specify as "unidimensional extension". From clustering and scaling experiments, it also emerges that the twenty-six sense-instances fall into five major clusters, corresponding to which five prototypical senses have been distinguished thus:

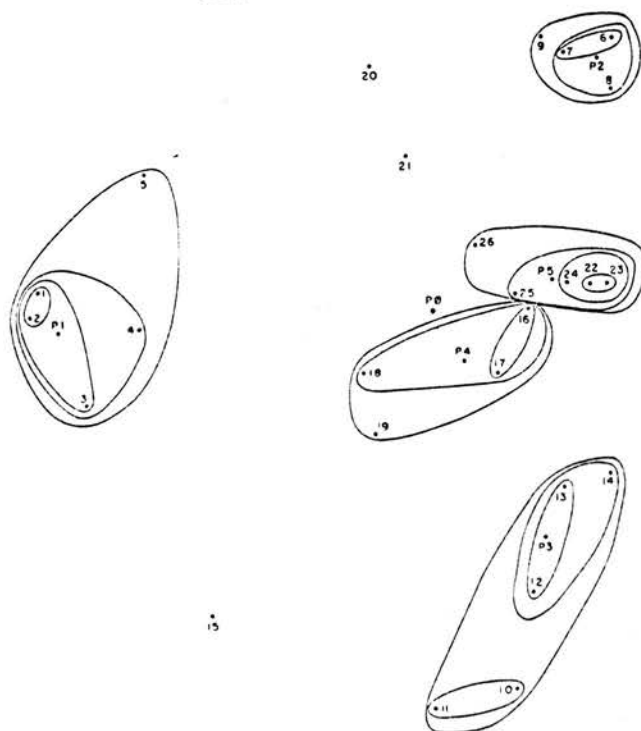
Cluster 1, comprised of sentences (1), (2), (3), and (4) (and marginally, (5)), suggests a sense of line that might be labelled a SEQUENCE or ORDERING OF CONSTRUCTS. Thus, in sentences (1) and (2), line is used to indicate KIND OR TYPE. In sentence (3) it denotes a CONSECUTIVE SEQUENCE OF ANCESTORS, and in sentence (4) it refers to a SEQUENCE OF THOUGHTS. Cluster 2 represents a grouping of sentences (6), (7), (8), and (9), and the sense of line found here can be described as a CONTINUOUS SEQUENCE OF WORDS. In sentences (6) and (7), and to a lesser extent (8), the words have a formal status, while in sentence (9) they do not. The sense of line in the third cluster, formed by sentences (10), (11), (12), (13), and (14), does not have the same conceptual unity as the other four. In sentences (10) and (11), line denotes the FILLING or COVERING of a surface by ARRANGING objects in a CONTIGUOUS FASHION. In sentences (12) and (13) people are ARRANGED IN A SERIES OF ROWS, while in sentence (14) it is MARKS that are ARRANGED IN ROWS. Cluster 4 (sentences (16), (17), (18), and (19)) indicates a BOUNDARY or DEMARCATION that may or may not have a physical existence. The BOUNDARY in sentences (16) and (17) does, while in sentence (18) it does not. Sentence (19) involves a DEMARCATION between moral constructs or categories. The fifth cluster (sentences (22), (23), (24), (25), and (26)) represents a sense of line that denotes a CONCRETE and CONTINUOUS MARK. This sense is most clear in sentences (22) and (23), where a distance is traced out by a MARK. In (25) it is a continuous row of trees and in sentence (26) it is a seam of iron ore. Sentences (20) and (21) were clustered at the final stages of the program and together with sentence (15) were unstable with respect to their positions in the two solutions. Our results, then, suggest the existence of five conceptually distinct clusters (major senses) which can be clearly labelled (Caramazza & Grober, 1976: 191).

Now from perceiving that senses result from the merging of occurrences, it is only a short step to observing two consequences both of which

present difficulties for a sense-synonymy definition.

The first consequence that follows from the nature of sense as the merging of occurrences is that there lie between the level of lexeme and the level of occurrence potentially infinite levels of sense of successive degrees of abstraction. This is clearly borne out by the spatial-hierarchical representation given by Caramazza and Grober of the twenty-six sense-instances of 'line' (1976: 190):

FIGURE 1. Combined spatial-hierarchical representation for senses of line.



What is clear from Figure 1 is that there are clusters within clusters and that the five major clusters are not equi-distant from one another. This being the case, we could distinguish, within the so-called prototypical senses, sub-senses and sub-sub-senses and so on until we reach the sense-instances. In fact, as a cursory glance at, say, OED will confirm, this is exactly what is sometimes done in unabridged dictionaries.

If to the twenty-six sentences used by Caramazza and Grober we now add the following:

- (3.1) His line is banking.
- (3.2) He is in the drapery line.
- (3.3) That's not much in my line.

it is fairly obvious that they would first form a cluster with (2)

before merging into a further, larger, cluster with (1), (3), (4) and (5) to yield the prototypical sense SEQUENCE. If so, the merging of the sense-instances of (2), (3.1), (3.2) and (3.3) would justify the setting up of what might be dubbed a sub-prototypical sense, i.e. "a department of activity; a branch of business" (The Short Oxford English Dictionary (henceforth SOED)). In fact, this is a sense commonly isolated in dictionaries.

So, if the question is asked as to, say, whether 'field' is sense-synonymous with 'line', the answer will depend on the depth or level of abstraction at which we are prepared to locate the senses. On the level of prototypical sense identified by Caramazza and Grober, we must deny that 'field' and 'line' are synonymous, for 'field' obviously cannot replace 'line' in (1), (3) and (4) while preserving acceptability and identical cognitive meaning. If, on the other hand, we move to the lower level designated by "a department of activity; a branch of business", then the answer might well be in the affirmative: at least in (2), (3.1), (3.2) and (3.3) 'field' seems to be occurrence-synonymous with 'line'. The important point is that whichever level we choose, our choice would be largely arbitrary (see, however, Chapter 4).

While the twenty-six occurrences of 'line' instanced by Caramazza and Grober are assignable in an unabridged conventional dictionary to a much larger number of senses than the five identified by Caramazza and Grober, they would be assigned to fewer than five senses, perhaps even only one, under certain approaches to polysemy.

One such approach is founded on the distinction between genuine ambiguity and mere indeterminacy (which Weinreich in the quotation below refers to as 'indefiniteness') of reference, whereby only the former justifies the setting up of distinct senses. This approach has been suggested by, among others, Weinreich (1966) and Hill (1970: 254-6), although Weinreich recognizes the difficulty inherent in this approach when he points out:

But this will presuppose, as a primitive concept of the theory, an absolute distinction between true ambiguity and mere indefiniteness of reference. The difficulty of validating such a distinction empirically makes its theoretical usefulness rather dubious (1966: 411-2).

Without going into the question of how many senses the twenty-six occurrences of 'line' would be assigned to under this approach, it would seem safe to suggest that the number would be lower than five.

For Bennett (1973) even genuine ambiguity, if and when it can be established, is too weak a condition for polysemy. With Weinreich's proposal (1966) in mind, Bennett says:

Wherever an ambiguous sentence can be 'disambiguated' by substituting for one of its lexemes, this does not necessarily prove that the original lexeme was polysemous (1973: 305).

Bennett's approach stems instead from the distinction, as he sees it, between intension and extension. He argues in favour of an intensional approach with reference to "eight senses of over that one might find in a dictionary" (the following numbering is Bennett's):

- (1) Directly above
The airplane flew over the town.
- (2) Above and covering
She spread a cloth over the table.
- (3) Before and covering
They hung a curtain over the picture.
- (4) Above in status or position
He has two people over him in the office.
- (5) Above and onto the other side of
We climbed over the gate.
- (6) Across, from one side to the other
The bridge over the river is closed.
- (7) Downwards from the edge of
John fell over a cliff.
- (8) As a result of collision with
John fell over a stone (1973: 298).

According to Bennett, "the dictionary approach to describing the meaning of a preposition such as 'over' is an extensional approach" (1973: 299). Under the intensional approach, however, "the same sense of the preposition occurs in each of the eight examples" (1973: 300). Bennett is prepared to recognize polysemy only under the following condition:

The question now arises whether an intensional view of meaning forces us to regard all lexemes as having only one sense. The answer to this question is no. Wherever there is no overlap whatsoever between two senses of a lexeme given by a dictionary, it is necessary to recognize separate senses. There seems to me to be nothing in common to the meaning of the preposition by in (9) and (10):

(9) He is standing by the door.

(10) It was painted by a professional.

In such cases the facts would be represented in a stratificational description by means of an UPWARD OR, showing the lexeme in question as being connected to two separate sememes (1973: 300).

It seems quite clear that on Bennett's view of polysemy the twenty-six occurrences of 'line' would be assigned to one and one sense

only. In fact, Bennett's approach to polysemy might be more accurately described as a synchronic approach to homonymy. If we operate on the level of sense as conceived by Bennett, we will to all intents and purposes be operating on the level of lexeme. (Incidentally, as shall see later, Bennett's view of polysemy does not seem totally consistent with his view of synonymy.)

In addition to the two approaches we have just discussed, a distinction has been drawn by Weinreich between what he calls contrastive and complementary senses (1964: 406). Contrastive senses are ones identified on the basis of genuine ambiguity. Complementary senses, on the other hand, correspond to what Bennett refers to as extensional senses. While emphasizing that the distinction is a prerequisite for descriptive semantics, Weinreich points out that "complementary senses, too, must be distinguished in a full semantic description" (1964: 406).

In the light of our discussion of sense so far, it is clear that at least three broad levels of sense should be distinguished: the intensional level, the contrastive level, and the complementary level. It is therefore not sufficient simply to say that synonymy is a meaning-relation on the level of sense: it is also necessary to specify which level of sense is in question. Furthermore, no matter which level of sense we operate on, we shall be faced with problems. If we operate on the intensional level, we will, as we have already seen, be operating to all intents and purposes on the level of lexeme, in which case our conception of synonymy will be open to the same objections as is an exclusive lexeme conception of synonymy. If we operate instead on the contrastive level, we will be up against the difficulty of drawing an absolute distinction between genuine ambiguity and mere indeterminacy of reference. And even greater difficulties will confront us if we move down to the complementary level. In the first place, the complementary level, unlike the two higher levels, is not homogeneous and can itself be divided into yet further levels. Not only will it be largely arbitrary, as we saw earlier, to choose one of such levels rather than another, it will also be difficult to be consistent in the exercise of such a choice. In the second place, as is only to be expected, the boundaries between complementary senses are much less distinct than those between intensional or contrastive senses.

This latter difficulty is in fact the second consequence following from the nature of sense as the merging of occurrences. To be more explicit, this consequence may be formulated as follows: The lower the level on which the merging of occurrences takes place, the more difficult it is to draw a hard and fast line between the resulting senses. And if there is no hard and fast line between the various senses of a lexeme, it will be difficult or even impossible unequivocally to assign occurrences of the lexeme to its senses.

Thus, unless we adopt a strictly intensional or contrastive approach (to the extent that the contrastive approach is workable) to polysemy, we shall be faced with the additional difficulty that there often do not exist clear boundaries between the various senses of a lexeme. As an example of such polysemy, Waldron (1979) instances the various senses of 'betray' in contrast to those of 'article':

BETRAY 1. 'To give someone over to an enemy by treachery' 2. 'To be disloyal to' 3. 'To lead astray; to deceive' 4. 'To reveal a secret' 5. 'To reveal inadvertently; to show signs of' 6. 'To seduce' (1979: 67).

ARTICLE 1. 'Clause of a statute, agreement, etc.' 2. 'Literary composition in a periodical or encyclopaedia' 3. 'Commodity, piece of goods, thing' 4. (Grammar) a, an, the (1979: 67).

Waldron comments thus:

The example of betray, though, shows a rather more subtle kind of polysemy than the other examples we have considered, most of which have been words whose several meanings have so diverged that they can be brought together as meanings of the same word only with some mental effort, and in some cases only by those with special etymological knowledge. It would be misleading to suggest that all polysemy is as clear-cut as that of article. Where this more subtle kind of polysemy is concerned it makes more sense to talk of a central meaning - or at least of a common factor for part or all of the meaning-range of the word. ...

A large number of very common words are polysemous in this finely-graduated way, as we can see from the amount of space and the number of subdivisions they are allotted in OED. Where these are concerned we may well ask what constitutes a 'different meaning' (1979: 69).

Now in view of the fact that the level of sense is capable of varying degrees of abstraction, together with the further fact that the boundaries between (complementary) senses are often indistinct, a sense-synonymy definition is beset with difficulties from which both lexeme-synonymy and occurrence-synonymy definitions are free.

Before it can lay claim to adequacy, therefore, it has to be shown to be backed up by a method for dividing a polysemous lexeme into its various senses such that

- (1) the senses established for a lexeme are distinct;
- (2) the senses established for a lexeme do not do violence to native speakers' intuitions;
- (3) the number of senses established for a lexeme is finite;
- (4) every occurrence is unequivocally assignable to a sense; and
- (5) the assignment of an occurrence to a sense does not do violence to native speakers' intuitions.

Strictly speaking, (1) and (2) are entailed by (4) and (5) respectively and vice versa. Either (1) and (2) or (4) and (5) are, therefore, redundant. Both pairs are included, however, because of their difference of emphasis. Given the nature of sense and polysemy, I believe it is the obligation of anyone working, explicitly or otherwise, with an exclusive sense-synonymy definition (i.e. to the exclusion of occurrence-synonymy, though not necessarily of lexeme-synonymy) to provide just such a method: it will not do to take polysemy for granted or simply to rely on intuitions or conventional dictionaries.

This is an obligation which those authors whose sense-synonymy definitions we cited earlier fail either to discharge or to do so satisfactorily. Little or no effort is made by Ullmann, Nida, Katz, or Abraham and Kiefer to provide an account of polysemy in support of their definitions of sense-synonymy. For this reason, their definitions of sense-synonymy must be considered open to the same objections as would vitiate a definition of sense-synonymy based on the conventional dictionary alone.

Baldinger (1980) goes to greater lengths but his solution to polysemy cannot be regarded as satisfactory. What we are informed of is no more than the interdependence between sense-synonymy and polysemy in terms of what Baldinger calls the onomasiological and semasiological structures:

Linguistic realization (the object of onomasiology) is carried out by means of "words", words subject to polysemy, and whose semasiological structure has to be taken into account. In other words, the onomasiological elements needed to study the realization of the concept in question are each embedded in a semasiological structure. The study of these semasiological structures, then, should precede the study of the onomasiological field. On the other hand,

it is precisely the distribution of lexical elements within an onomasiological field which determines, to a great extent, the semasiological value of each element. First, then, we have to study the different onomasiological fields in which, by virtue of its polysemy, each word participates, in order to be able to determine subsequently its different semasiological values within a semasiological field. In other words, we have to start at both ends - which is impossible (1980: 211).

Baldinger clearly equivocates here, for the solution he offers is patently circular. To break out of the circle, we will have to choose a direction. If we choose the semasiological direction, we will obviously be no better off than the conventional dictionary. If, on the other hand, we proceed in the onomasiological direction (i.e. treat substitution by synonyms as the sole factor in resolving issues of polysemy), then we will be following Kurylowicz's approach to polysemy.

Weinreich outlines Kurylowicz's approach as follows:

A more elaborate solution, suggested by Kurylowicz, could be stated as follows: a dictionary entry W will be shown to have subpaths (submeanings), W_1 and W_2 , if and only if there is in the language a subpath Z_1 of some entry Z which is synonymous with W_1 and is not synonymous with W_2 . According to Kurylowicz, the notions of polysemy (path branching) and synonymy are complementary, and neither is theoretically tenable without the other. Thus, the path for file would be shown to branch insofar as file₁ is synonymous with put away, whereas file₂ is not. However, the condition would have to be strengthened to require the synonyms to be simplex, since it is always possible to have multi-word circumlocutions which are equivalent to indefinitely differentiated submeanings of single words (1966: 412).

Now if by synonymy is meant sense-synonymy, we are back in a circle, for we will be guilty of assuming a prior solution to polysemy instead of providing one. So let us pursue the other interpretation whereby synonymy is construed as occurrence-synonymy. Given this interpretation, it follows that every time we encounter occurrence-synonymy between two words we are automatically justified in recognizing a distinct sense for each word, that the two resultant senses are synonymous, and that a word has as many senses as it has different mutually-non-synonymous occurrence-synonyms. In the light of these consequences, it is clear that occurrence-synonymy and sense-synonymy have in effect become merged into one. Alston's (1971) solution to polysemy is essentially the same and therefore incurs the same consequences.

Thus, on the evidence at our disposal we have to conclude that none of the above conceptions of sense-synonymy succeeds in vindicating the presuppositions on which it rests: these conceptions either will lapse into occurrence-synonymy, in which case they will be better regarded as such, or evidently fail to offer any adequate, non-circular solution to the crucial question of polysemy. The view of synonymy as holding exclusively between senses is based, as we saw earlier, on the presupposition that it is possible in a principled way to segment any polysemous lexeme into a finite number of distinct senses, which can then be used as the basis for the study of sense-synonymy. Such a presupposition, we have seen, has so far not been satisfactorily justified.

This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that "the practice and whole methodology of the relevant parts of linguistics are at present in too provisional and uncertain a state of development (Wiggins, 1971: 14). But is a satisfactory solution to polysemy possible in principle? Lyons's answer is that "it may well be that the whole notion of discrete lexical senses is ill-founded; and if it is, there is no hope of defining lexemes on this basis" (1977: 554). As far as the present discussion is concerned, we need not go so far as to agree entirely with this opinion, for a large portion of the vocabulary is reasonably unproblematic as regards polysemy. At the same time, there seems little doubt that to a significant part of the vocabulary (e.g. lexemes such as 'true'/'real' and 'fast'/'quick') the notion of discrete senses is not wholly applicable. If so, it will be safe to conclude that no conception of sense-synonymy is possible which will deal satisfactorily with the vocabulary as a whole. But even where polysemy is unproblematic, an exclusive sense-synonymy conception may yet turn out to be too strong. To prove this, it is sufficient to show, as we shall try to do later in this chapter, that the conception of synonymy as holding between occurrences is not too weak.

In the meantime we may note a further, third, consequence which arises from the nature of sense as the merging of occurrences. If senses are derived from occurrences, then apart from the fallibility of those responsible for deriving them, why should we accord senses such a sacrosanct status as to treat them as indivisible units? There is no reason whatsoever why we should do so. But that senses

should be treated in this way is exactly the theoretical assumption underlying an exclusive sense-synonymy conception (cf. Lyons, 1968: 428). Essentially the same applies to any exclusive lexeme-synonymy conception.

Thus the view of synonymy as holding exclusively between lexemes is based on the assumption that meaning is invariant at the level of lexeme. Similarly, the view of synonymy as holding exclusively between senses is based on the assumption that meaning is invariant on the level of sense. In either case the underlying theory of meaning is an autonomist one, which treats meaning as independent of context. The consequence of the former assumption is that two occurrences cannot be synonymous unless their corresponding lexemes are synonymous. The same consequence arises from the latter assumption, except that it is less strong: two occurrences cannot be synonymous unless their corresponding senses are synonymous. Given the nature of sense-meaning and lexeme-meaning, neither assumption is justified and neither consequence acceptable. We will examine the autonomist view of lexical meaning more closely in 10.4.

To sum up our discussion of sense-synonymy, let me first bring together the four arguments against any conception of synonymy in which synonymy is treated as a meaning-relation holding between senses, possibly also between lexemes, but not between occurrences. These are (1) the argument from the plurality of levels of sense, with more specific arguments regarding each of the three broad levels, (2) the argument from the frequent vagueness of the boundaries between (esp. complementary) senses, (3) the argument from the lack of material adequacy of any exclusive sense-synonymy definition (i.e. too strong), and (4) the argument from the inadequacy of the underlying autonomist view of lexical meaning for being one-sided.

What stands out from our discussion of sense-synonymy is the dependence of sense-synonymy upon polysemy. From this dependence it clearly follows that our understanding of the former depends in large measure on our understanding of the latter. I have tried to achieve as clear an understanding of sense-synonymy as I can in the light of the present knowledge of polysemy at my disposal. It is to be hoped that improvements in our understanding of polysemy will result in improvements in our understanding of sense-synonymy. I believe, however, that such improvements will not invalidate my

main lines of argument about sense-synonymy, for they are based on what I perceive as problems inherent in the phenomenon of polysemy and not contingent therefore upon the present state of research.

3.4. Occurrence-synonymy

The theoretical assumptions underlying exclusive lexeme-synonymy and exclusive sense-synonymy definitions are far from undisputed. Those who reject these assumptions necessarily also reject their consequences. Such a rejection is implicit in the following definition of synonymy by Bennett:

If there is one or more environment in which two lexemes are substitutable for each other without any change in COGNITIVE meaning, then they are synonymous in that environment or those environments (1968: 158).

Another statement in favour of occurrence-synonymy can be extracted from the following observations by Blose:

Another pair of putatively mutually entailing, but non-synonymous sentences is 'This has shape' and 'This has size'. But once more the reply can be that to call the two sentences nonsynonymous may be a mistake. And in this case the mistake can be seen quite easily even without any further appeal to what must be admitted about synonymy and mutual entailment. For once we see precisely what it is to say that 'This has shape' and 'This has size' are synonymous, we lose some of our reluctance to say it. The common apprehension is that if the two sentences are synonymous then the words 'shape' and 'size' must be synonymous too. And indeed they must, but only in a very limited sense. To call the words synonymous-in-at-least-one-context is not to authorize synonymy substitutions of 'shape' for 'size' in the sentence 'The room is 30 by 15 feet in size'; nor of 'size' for 'shape' in 'The candy box is the shape of a heart'. For the resulting sentences would not entail the originals, nor vice-versa. It is only to authorize the replacement of 'shape' by 'size' in 'This has shape', and of 'size' by 'shape' in 'This has size' - a replacement that is wholly unimpeachable since admitted as proper by an adversary who insists that the two sentences entail each other. In short, the words 'size' and 'shape' enjoy only the most restrictive sort of synonymy - a synonymy that is realized only in cases where both words are equatable with 'extension'.

Of course, to repeat, even if the innocuousness of the synonymy could not be demonstrated in this way, the contention could still be defended that the sentences are synonymous. For whenever there is mutual entailment we must admit there to be synonymy (1965: 311-2).

In Crystal (1980) we find a further example where synonymy is defined as a meaning-relation on the level of occurrence:

Synonymy can be said to occur if items are close enough in their meaning to allow a choice to be made between them in some contexts, without there being any difference for the meaning of the sentence as a whole. Linguistic studies of synonymy have emphasised the importance of context in deciding whether a set of lexical items is synonymous (1980: 345).

Occurrence-synonymy is also treated as a legitimate type of synonymy in Naess's theory of empirical semantics, where it is identified with the concept of 'interpretation' (cf. Naess, 1953; Berg, 1968).

A systematic argument against lexeme/sense-synonymy and in favour of occurrence-synonymy has been furnished by Lyons (1963, 1968), who holds that

In common with all meaning-relations, synonymy must be bound to context; we may indeed accept, as the limiting case, that two forms might be synonymous in one and only one context (1963: 74).

Thus for Lyons the relevant units for investigating synonymy are forms as they are used in (the same) context. If two forms can be shown by empirical means to have the same meaning in a particular context, then they are to be regarded as synonymous in that context. No assumptions are made as to whether their synonymy extends into other contexts. For two forms to have the same meaning in one context is thus a sufficient condition of synonymy. I will discuss Lyons's approach to synonymy in some detail in Chapter 7.

I hold the view that the conception of synonymy as a meaning-relation between occurrences is both operationally and materially adequate.

As far as operational adequacy is concerned, it seems to me clear that a conception of occurrence-synonymy is free from objections as regards the identity of the lexical units involved, for no unwarranted presupposition concerning the identity of such lexical units is entailed by this conception of synonymy. Of the three conceptions of synonymy, occurrence-synonymy is the most operationally adequate in this respect while sense-synonymy is the least so. There is, of course, the separate question of whether a conception of occurrence-synonymy can be operationally adequate as regards what the equation sign stands for. I will argue for a positive answer in Chapter 7.

With regard to material adequacy, we have already, though somewhat tacitly, made out a case for occurrence-synonymy in 1.2. The argument set forth there may be encapsulated in the following two statements:

- (1) Occurrence-synonymy is materially adequate because it reflects what happens in everyday communication - in the sense that native speakers readily employ words in such a way that we are justified in treating them as synonymous in a particular sentence/context or particular sentences/contexts despite the failure of the same words to behave synonymously in other sentences/contexts.
- (2) Occurrence-synonymy is materially adequate because it reflects (at least some) native speakers' intuitions - in the sense that they readily judge words to have the same meaning in a particular sentence/context or particular sentences/contexts despite the fact that they have judged, or will judge, the same words not to have the same meaning in other sentences/contexts.

A number of objections have been raised by Harris (1973) against the conception of synonymy as a meaning-relation between occurrences. Although these objections are directed at Lyons's (1963) formulation of the conception in particular, they are clearly intended to apply to conceptions of occurrence-synonymy in general.

The first objection is that there is no operationally adequate means of determining whether two occurrences are synonymous, since there is no operationally adequate way of ascertaining 'pragmatic commitment', in terms of which occurrence-synonymy is defined in the first place (by Lyons). Here the charge of lack of operational adequacy is directed not at the identity of lexical units (i.e. A and B), occurrences being unproblematic in this respect, but at the characterization of what the equation sign stands for. We shall see in Chapter 7 that this objection is ill-founded.

21 The second objection is that the conception of synonymy as a meaning-relation between occurrences suffers from lack of material adequacy, since once synonymy is conceived in this way meaning becomes confused with reference and consequently mere identity of reference is mistaken for identity of meaning. To clinch our claim that occurrence-synonymy is materially adequate, I will try and show in Chapter 7 that this need not be the case.

The third objection is that conceiving synonymy as a meaning-relation holding exclusively between occurrences precludes generic statements of synonymy relations. Whereas the other two objections

both concern the definition of synonymy, this last objection clearly is to do with the description of synonymy, that is, with the question of what is the best way to state the facts of synonymy. Thus this objection will be valid only if we confine the description of synonymy to the level of occurrence. Since, as will become clear in the next chapter, we will not do this, this objection no longer applies.

In addition to the three objections raised by Harris, there is a further objection implicit in the autonomist view of meaning. This is self-evident in view of the fact that occurrence-synonymy is based on the contextualist view of lexical meaning, to which the autonomist view is normally treated as diametrically opposed. I will try and overcome this implicit objection in 10.4. I will not do this, however, by pursuing the line of argument that the contextualist view of lexical meaning is more satisfactory than the autonomist view. I will do this, instead, by making out a case for the stand that the two views of lexical meaning are complementary, with neither view wholly tenable on its own. Incidentally, such a stand underlies, though it is not necessary to, what I have to say in the next chapter.

Once occurrence-synonymy is shown to be materially adequate, it follows that a conception of synonymy as a meaning-relation holding exclusively between senses and/or lexemes is too strong and must consequently be rejected for imposing unjustifiably stringent requirements as regards material adequacy.

Treating occurrence-synonymy as materially adequate does not preclude us, however, on purely logical grounds, from conceiving synonymy as a meaning-relation holding also between senses and/or lexemes. We may see ourselves as precluded from doing so only by two other considerations.

The first consideration concerns sense-synonymy alone. It adduces the four arguments advanced earlier against an exclusive sense-synonymy conception, i.e. (1) the argument from the plurality of levels of sense, (2) the argument from the frequent vagueness of the boundaries between (esp. complementary) senses, (3) the argument from the lack of material adequacy of any exclusive sense-synonymy conception for being too strong, and (4) the argument from the inadequacy of the underlying autonomist view of lexical meaning for



being one-sided. Of these four arguments, the first will cease to apply if we can find a principled way of deciding which level of sense to operate on in each and every case we want to work with sense-synonymy. I will try to offer such a way in the next chapter. It should be stressed, however, that the discovery of such a way will not serve to vindicate the conception of synonymy as a meaning-relation holding exclusively between senses; for not only is such a way absent from the conceptions of sense-synonymy we discussed earlier, it cannot, as we shall see in the next chapter, be provided by an exclusive sense-synonymy conception in principle. We can overcome the second argument by noting that this argument does not say that the boundaries between (esp. complementary) senses are always vague but only that they are sometimes so. Thus the second argument contains no reason why we should not work with sense-synonymy where the boundaries between senses are clear-cut; it only imposes limits on the extent to which we can work with sense-synonymy without breaching the condition of operational adequacy. The third argument does not apply to any treatment of synonymy in which synonymy is conceived as a meaning-relation holding between both senses and occurrences as opposed to one holding between senses and/or lexemes alone. There is thus no need to try and overcome this argument. The same is true of the fourth argument, for the autonomist view of lexical meaning is objectionable, not for sanctioning sense-synonymy, but for being one-sided in ruling out occurrence-synonymy.

The second consideration concerns both sense-synonymy and lexeme-synonymy. It derives from the contextualist view of lexical meaning, according to which it is wrong to posit any meaning units larger than occurrence-meanings. In my view, just as the autonomist view of lexical meaning is one-sided in failing to give due recognition to sentence and context and, as far as we are concerned, in ruling out occurrence-synonymy, so the contextualist view of lexical meaning is equally one-sided in failing to acknowledge the relative autonomy of lexical meaning and, as far as we are concerned, in ruling out sense-synonymy. If so, then this second consideration does not stand, either. I will expand on this argument in 10.4.

Not only are the above-mentioned two considerations invalid, there are positive reasons, with regard to the description to synonymy,

for making use of the levels of sense and lexeme, particularly the former. These reasons will emerge in the next chapter and in Chapters 9 and 10 as well as throughout the text.

We can now sum up our position as regards the definition of synonymy as follows. The definition of synonymy should be such as to accommodate occurrence-synonymy. At the same time, it need not, on either logical or a number of other grounds, rule out lexeme-synonymy and sense-synonymy, and should not do so if the two higher levels of synonymy can be turned to advantage (in ways which we shall see later).

3.5. Exemplification

It is time for exemplification. But before looking at specific examples, let me make two preliminary points concerning the exemplification used in the present study as a whole.

(1) In order to reduce the possibility of error or bias arising in my example sentences as a result of my being a non-native speaker of English, I have for the most part modelled these closely on illustrations of usage found in dictionaries (esp. OALDCE), occasionally to the extent of adopting them verbatim. With the acceptability of such example sentences thus reasonably assured, I then placed alongside the word under focus in each sentence a synonymy candidate, with the aim of discovering whether it could replace the former (a) without making the sentence unacceptable and (b) without changing the meaning of the sentence. In what I saw as clear-cut cases I relied on the evidence of my own introspection. Where I considered it unsafe to trust my own intuitions, as in the majority of cases, I based my analysis on judgements which I had elicited from native speakers (usually three to five in each case) either verbally or through somewhat crude informal questionnaires. While I would have liked to aim at firmer empirical validity, I hope that at least some members of the sets of examples with which I have had to be content will adequately serve their illustrative purpose. Where they do not, I nevertheless like to think that the points being illustrated will still stand and that there exist better examples which I have not been able to find.

(2) Where two words separated by a stroke in an example sentence are without marking, they are taken to be interchangeable in that sentence without changing its cognitive meaning. Where the second word of the pair is marked with an asterisk, it means that the first word of the pair is acceptable in the sentence whereas the second word is either not acceptable in the sentence or does not preserve the meaning of the sentence if it replaces the first word. A question mark serves the same purpose as an asterisk except that it indicates some measure of indeterminacy.

For the purpose of this section, let us assume that our treatment of examples conforms to generally-agreed criteria of synonymy, since it is the question of between what lexical units synonymy is a meaning-relation that is now under focus.

Our first example consists of 'thrive' and 'flourish' as they occur in

(3.4) He worked hard and his business thrived/flourished.

(3.5) Children thrive/flourish on good food.

(3.6) Very few plants will thrive/flourish without water.

(3.7) Socrates flourished/*thrived about 400 BC.

Under the exclusive lexeme-synonymy definition, 'thrive' and 'flourish' cannot be regarded as synonymous in (3.4) to (3.6), simply because they are not synonymous in (3.7).

The procedure implicit in the exclusive sense-synonymy definition would be something along the following lines. Before we look at the behaviour of 'thrive' and 'flourish' in (3.4) to (3.7), we already have at our disposal a number of independently-established senses attaching to the two words respectively. We then examine the two words as they occur in the sentences in question and try to assign each occurrence to a sense. If at the end of this process we find that, say, only the occurrences of 'thrive' in (3.4) to (3.6) are assignable to the same sense attaching to 'thrive' and the same is true of 'flourish', we will conclude that, relative to the data in question, there is a sense attaching to 'thrive' which is synonymous with a sense attaching to 'flourish'. If, on the other hand, we find that, say, all the occurrences of 'flourish' in (3.4) to (3.7) are assignable to the same sense, then we will have to conclude instead that 'thrive' and 'flourish' are not synonymous in (3.4) to (3.6), either. Since, however, the occurrence of

'flourish' in (3.7) can be fairly reasonably assigned to a different sense from the other occurrences of 'flourish', those who subscribe to the exclusive sense-synonymy definition will not be prevented from attributing synonymy to 'thrive' and 'flourish' as they occur in (3.4) to (3.6) and regarding these three instances of occurrence-synonymy as instances of sense-synonymy between one or more pairs of senses. Whether (3.4) to (3.6) are treated as instantiating synonymy between one pair of senses or more will depend on the number of sense(s) to which the occurrences of 'thrive' and 'flourish' are assigned respectively. As far as conventional dictionaries are concerned, practice varies quite considerably.

If we adopt the occurrence-synonymy definition, our procedure regarding (3.4) to (3.7) will be simple and straightforward. We will consider one sentence at a time without being affected by the other sentences or any potential sentences, and will pronounce 'thrive' and 'flourish' individually synonymous in (3.4), (3.5) and (3.6).

As our second example, we turn to 'real' and 'true' as they are used in

(3.8) He has a real/true interest in art.

(3.9) Is this real/true silk or rayon?

(3.10) True/real friendship should last forever.

(3.11) The British sovereign has little real/true power.

(3.12) The doctors could not effect a real/*true cure.

(3.13) Things that happen in real/*true life are sometimes stranger than things that happen in fiction.

(3.14) This picture is true/*real to nature.

No complications arise with regard to either the exclusive lexeme-synonymy definition or the occurrence-synonymy definition. As far as the exclusive lexeme-synonymy definition is concerned, 'real' and 'true' are not synonymous in (3.8) to (3.11), by virtue of the fact that they are not synonymous in (3.12) to (3.14). Under the occurrence-synonymy definition, on the other hand, 'real' and 'true' are synonymous in the first four sentences despite the fact that they are not synonymous in the rest.

With the exclusive sense-synonymy definition, however, we run into serious difficulties. Here, unlike in (3.4) to (3.7), the difficulty of dividing a lexeme into discrete senses is thrown into sharp relief. Not only is it difficult adequately to establish

separate senses for 'real' and 'true', it is no less difficult satisfactorily to assign occurrences to senses where the latter are available (though not sufficiently adequate) in conventional dictionaries. Those who treat synonymy as a meaning-relation holding exclusively between senses have not shown us how to overcome either difficulty. In the absence of an adequate solution to these difficulties, we cannot even begin to make judgements about sense-synonymy with regard to the above sentences.

Words like 'real' and 'true' are by no means rare. Here it will suffice to give one more example, i.e. 'lively' and 'animated' as they occur in

- (3.15) They spent an hour in lively/animated talk about their respective travels in England and France.
- (3.16) We had a (an) lively/animated discussion.
- (3.17) There was a (an) lively/animated atmosphere during the debate.
- (3.18) He has a (an) lively/*animated imagination.
- (3.19) The patient seems a little more lively/*animated this morning.

We find yet a third type of situation in the case of 'fire' and 'conflagration', and 'drink' and 'eat'. Under the occurrence-synonymy definition, these two pairs of words will be treated as synonymous as they occur in (3.20) and (3.22) respectively among the following sentences:

- (3.20) A disastrous conflagration/fire made thousands of people homeless.
- (3.21) There was a small fire/*conflagration in the street.
- (3.22) They drink/eat soup at the beginning of a meal.
- (3.23) He seldom drinks/*eats whisky.
- (3.24) Eating/+drinking habits vary from country to country.

That the two pairs of words will not be treated as synonymous in (3.20) and (3.22) respectively under the exclusive lexeme-synonymy definition is only too obvious. It is almost equally unlikely that they will qualify as synonymous under the exclusive sense-synonymy definition. For to accord them the status of sense-synonyms we would have to identify, for example, a distinct sense for 'eat' with the sense-meaning of "drink", although even this would be of no avail in the light of (3.23). But this is a path leading to excessive or even infinite polysemy which surely no one subscribing to the sense-synonymy definition would be prepared to follow.

CHAPTER 4

LEXICAL UNITS AND DESCRIPTION

4.1. The need for descriptive economy

The definition of synonymy, it was argued in the last chapter, should allow for synonymy as a meaning-relation between occurrences. It was also argued, however, that allowing for occurrence-synonymy need not prevent us from also allowing for lexeme-synonymy and sense-synonymy. The aim of this chapter is to show why allowing for occurrence-synonymy should not, in the description of synonymy, prevent us from doing so, and to provide a principled way of making use of the levels of lexeme and sense when the need for descriptive economy arises.

The need for descriptive economy is self-evident in numerous such cases as are exemplified by 'match' and 'equal' as the two words occur in the following sentences:

- (4.1) It has been said that no language can match/equal French in expressing ideas with clarity and exactness.
- (4.2) This hotel can't be matched/equalled for good service.
- (4.3) No matter how hard he tries, he can't match/equal his brother's achievements.
- (4.4) The carpets do not match/*equal the curtains.

Here strict adherence to an exclusive occurrence-synonymy conception would mean that, instead of trying to see whether (4.1) to (4.3) can be subsumed under a single statement of sense-synonymy, we are only allowed to state the instances of synonymy in these sentences individually. The same applies to 'thrive' and 'flourish' in (3.4) to (3.6), as to numerous other pairs of words. In both cases it seems to me perfectly unobjectionable to invoke sense-synonymy; in refusing to do so we would commit the error of forgoing economy of statement when economy of statement is both feasible and justifiable.

Suppose, further, that (4.4) were not the case and that 'match' and 'equal' were interchangeable in any and all sentences without changing their cognitive meaning. Under this supposition, it would seem, moreover, quite appropriate to achieve economy of statement

by invoking lexeme-synonymy. In the case of 'match' and 'equal' this is obviously a hypothetical situation. But there do seem to be pairs of lexemes (particularly non-polysemous ones) which would be susceptible to such a treatment, such as 'chap' and 'bloke'. Even actual instances of lexeme-synonymy aside, it would seem sensible that any description of synonymy which aims for the greatest possible economy of statement should allow for this possibility.

In the light of what has been said above, I wish to advance the thesis that to be maximally adequate the description of facts of synonymy should not be confined to the level of occurrence but should be undertaken on the level of sense or lexeme whenever it is profitable to do so. This thesis, as will become clear in the course of the present chapter, is neutral as regards the opposition between the autonomist and the contextualist view of lexical meaning, and it need not involve us in attributing undue theoretical status to the level of sense.

Since the level of sense is complicated by problems over and above those shared by the level of lexeme, we shall concentrate in the main on the level of sense.

4.2. The nature and status of sense

The central question, then, is: What is the nature and status of the level of sense?

To this question, an answer was in fact already provided in the last chapter when we looked at the study of 'polysemy and the structure of the subjective lexicon' conducted by Caramazza and Grober. It will be recalled that two findings have emerged from that study which bear on our interest. The first of these is that it is plausible to identify three levels of meaning for each (polysemous) lexeme: a core meaning, prototypical senses, and sense-instances. The second finding is that prototypical senses, which make up the intermediate level, result from the merging of sense-instances. We may now add that these findings are arrived at within the framework of an autonomist view of lexical meaning, as Caramazza and Grober make explicit with the statement "we favour the autonomy of lexical meanings" (1976: 186).

It is interesting, therefore, to find essentially the same two views expressed by a scholar who stands on the other side of the autonomist/contextualist divide. I am referring to Walpole (1961).

As an advocate of the contextualist view of lexical meaning, Walpole maintains that "a symbol has meaning only in its context" (1961: 105). At the same time, he subscribes to the notion of finite polysemy when he says that "most of our words each have many meanings" (1961: 20). By meanings are clearly meant senses rather than occurrence-meanings, the latter being referred to as "the different uses" of a lexeme, since all lexemes each have many (in fact countless) occurrence-meanings. In addition, a level higher than sense is postulated in the shape of "the totality of senses".

Although all three levels of meaning - lexeme-meaning, sense-meaning, and occurrence-meaning - are recognized by Walpole, it is important to note that occurrence-meaning is still considered prior to sense-meaning. The level of occurrence-meaning and the level of sense-meaning are seen as mediated by what Walpole calls 'multiple definition', which "consists of the linking up of two different parts of a context - or, to put it in another way, of merging two contexts into a larger one" (1961: 33). What results from the merging of contexts is the level of sense-meaning.

With reference to the lexeme 'case', Walpole lists

... three steps in the process of multiple definition. First, one collects examples of different uses of the word, in their contexts. Secondly, one sorts out what seem to be "separate senses" and defines each sense. Lastly, one scans this list of different senses, which forms a map of the word, and considers how each sense is related to the totality of senses (1961: 23).

For Walpole, the segmentation of a lexeme into its various senses is designed as something which serves a practical purpose; "multiple definition", he says, "is a technique for controlling the shifts and ambiguities of words" (1961: 22).

Moreover, Walpole is prepared to admit that "there is not always one 'right' answer" to the merging of occurrence-meanings to yield sense-meanings (1961: 37), as I think one of the exercises set by Walpole amply testifies:

True

- A. 1. If I believe it strongly enough, then it is true.
2. The last witness had given a true description of the incident.

3. The scientist said that though his colleague's theory did not, as far as he knew, contradict the facts he could not accept it as true.
- B. 1. Say what's true, and shame the Devil ...
2. All things which are beautiful are true ...
3. The true story of that expedition was never revealed ...
4. Everything you see is not necessarily true ... (1961: 36-7).

In this exercise we are asked to "put beside each sentence in B the number of the A sentence which comes nearest to using the word in the same sense" (1961: 34). In fact, what Walpole does with 'case' is clearly open to criticism:

Let "case" provide a simple example. It has different senses in "a case of diphtheria", "the case for birth control", "in case of fire". One could begin a multiple definition of "case" on the basis of these phrases alone.

1. A case is an example of a disease.
2. A case is a group of arguments in support of a belief.
3. A case is an event (1961: 22-3).

One may well question whether 'a case of diphtheria' and 'in case of fire' justify the setting up of two senses rather than one.

It will have been seen that, like Caramazza and Grober, Walpole identifies three levels of meaning, notwithstanding their diametrically opposed positions on the question of the relation between meaning and context. Moreover, also like Caramazza and Grober, Walpole clearly sees senses as resulting from the merging of occurrence-meanings. Thus, despite the fact that lexeme-meaning and occurrence-meaning assume central importance in the autonomist and contextualist view of lexical meaning respectively, the two opposing views of meaning - as conceived by Caramazza and Grober and by Walpole respectively - have in common both the identification of levels of meaning and the conception of senses as the product of the merging of occurrence-meanings. This is what I had in mind when I said earlier that the decision to carry out the description of synonymy relations on the levels of lexeme and sense where profitable is neutral as between the autonomist and the contextualist view of lexical meaning. More particularly, and in order further to show that allowing for occurrence-synonymy need not prevent us from also allowing for lexeme-synonymy and sense-synonymy, it should perhaps be stressed that the setting up of the level of sense is entirely compatible with the contextualist view, as expressed by Walpole, that occurrence-meaning is prior to sense-meaning. By implication, the recognition of sense-synonymy should be seen as

entirely compatible with the contextualist position, inferrable from Walpole's account of meaning, that occurrence-synonymy is prior to sense-synonymy.

In addition to what we have just seen to be held in common by Caramazza and Grober on the one hand and Walpole on the other, I should like to underline a further point, which I only touched upon in my brief exposition of Walpole's conception of polysemy. It is this: the level of sense is set up, not (primarily) as a theoretical construct, but as a means of serving practical purposes. This point is important for two reasons. First, it offers a general justification for making use of the level of sense-synonymy without in the least undermining the position of occurrence-synonymy as the more primitive and hence more important level of synonymy. Secondly, it helps us to overcome two specific arguments, mentioned in the last chapter, against making use of the level of sense-synonymy, i.e. (1) the argument from the plurality of the levels of sense and (2) the argument from the frequent vagueness of the boundaries between (esp. complementary) senses. This second reason will be expanded presently.

In the meantime, it will be helpful to sum up this section with the following two statements. The nature of sense is as the merging of occurrence-meanings. The status of sense, in descriptive semantics, is as a 'tool' serving practical purposes.

4.3. The nature and status of sense-synonymy statements

It is on exactly the same lines that statements of sense-synonymy are to be conceived in the present study.

Thus, as far as their nature is concerned, statements of sense-synonymy are to be conceived as the merging of statements of occurrence-synonymy. Statements of lexeme-synonymy, by extension, may be conceived as the merging of statements of sense-synonymy or simply as the merging, on a larger scale than in the case of sense-synonymy, of statements of occurrence-synonymy. Given the high incidence of polysemy in English, it is not surprising that statements of lexeme-synonymy seem to be seldom warranted. Nevertheless, we would do well to make our descriptive framework flexible enough to allow for

this possibility, however rarely it may materialize in practice. Statements of sense-synonymy, on the other hand, have a much more useful role to play in contributing towards economy of description.

As far as their status is concerned, statements of sense-synonymy are to be conceived as a 'tool' serving the practical purpose of descriptive economy. This brings us back to the two arguments which I said, towards the end of the last section, might be overcome by adopting the conception of the level of sense as a means of serving practical purposes.

The argument from the plurality of levels of sense constitutes a valid argument against making use of the level of sense-synonymy only as long as the selection of one level of sense rather than another in any given case is arbitrary and the selections of levels in different cases are inconsistent in a haphazard way. Now once we cease to conceive sense-synonymy statements as based on senses established independently of and prior to the investigation of synonymy and begin to conceive of them instead as a means of achieving descriptive economy, this argument ceases to be valid. The selection of one level of sense rather than another in a given case will no longer be arbitrary because that level of sense will be selected which will best serve the purpose of descriptive economy. What is exactly meant by 'which best serves the purpose of descriptive economy' will become clear when later in this chapter we introduce two principles designed to ensure the adequacy of sense-synonymy statements. The selections of levels of sense in different cases will no longer be inconsistent in a haphazard way because where inconsistency arises this will have been the result of well-motivated selections in individual cases.

When statements of sense-synonymy are conceived as a 'tool' serving the practical purpose of descriptive economy, the argument from the frequent vagueness of the boundaries between (esp. complementary) senses will also cease to be valid. We have already noted in 3.4 that this argument does not say that it is always the case that (esp. complementary) senses are divided by vague boundaries, but only that this is sometimes the case. Now what we require of a tool is that it is useful on some occasions or for some purposes, and we do not abandon it simply because it is not always useful. On the other hand, of course, it is not wise to attempt to use it when it

is not fit for its intended purpose. The same applies to the way in which we should treat sense-synonymy statements.

Broadly speaking, it is in the light of the last few paragraphs that sense-synonymy statements are to be conceived.

4.4. The usefulness and limitations of sense-synonymy statements: different types of cases

To be somewhat more specific about the usefulness and limitations of sense-synonymy statements, we may divide instances of synonymy roughly into three types. Under the first type come lexemes whose occurrences merge fairly neatly into a number of discrete senses. It is when synonymy is seen to hold between the occurrences of such words that the level of sense can often be put to good use in capturing the relevant facts in a statement of sense-synonymy. Among the words we have looked at so far, 'thrive' and 'flourish', and 'match' and 'equal' may be cited as examples of this category.

The second category consists of lexemes whose occurrences it is difficult, in varying degrees, to combine neatly into discrete senses. Such synonymy as is found between occurrences assignable to words of this category is less amenable to description on the level of sense. Among the words examined earlier, 'real' and 'true', and 'lively' and 'animated' would seem to exemplify this category.

In the case of both of the last two categories, occurrence-synonymy is more or less expected rather than merely accidental - more will be said about this later. It is the somewhat unexpected coincidence of meaning that characterizes the third category. It is exemplified by the occurrence-synonymy we noted earlier between 'drink' and 'eat'. Not only is it counter-intuitive to describe such instances of occurrence-synonymy in sense-synonymy statements, it is also inappropriate to do so on the ground that excessive polysemy would result if such a practice was consistently adopted. Instead, instances like this may be regarded as occurrence-synonyms par excellence.

We will later have occasion to clarify and expand on some of the points touched upon in this section, but for the moment it suffices to have indicated, in a somewhat crude way, where sense-synonymy

statements are useful, where they are of limited usefulness, and where they are of no use at all.

4.5. Descriptive adequacy and descriptive economy: two complementary principles

Although our conception of sense-synonymy and lexeme-synonymy is inductive in character, it is neither possible nor necessary to proceed in an inductive manner when trying to arrive at the most economical synonymy statements. Therefore, instead of moving from occurrence-synonymy hypotheses to sense-synonymy hypotheses and then to lexeme-synonymy hypotheses, we will follow the opposite, deductive, direction. In theory, this means starting with lexeme-synonymy hypotheses. In practice, however, since lexeme-synonymy hypotheses are seldom worth seriously entertaining, we would do well in most cases to start with sense-synonymy hypotheses. There need be no requirements as to how we form such hypotheses: we may be guided by intuitions, or dictionaries, or whatever. What matters is that, once they are formed, such hypotheses should be subjected to attempts at falsifying them. They will be judged to have with-held attempts at falsification and therefore to qualify as sense-synonymy statements if and only if they conform to the following constraints.

The first constraint is designed to ensure what might be called the legitimacy of statements of sense-synonymy. Under this constraint, it is legitimate to conclude that A^S and B^S are synonymous if and only if for every occurrence assignable to A^S there is assignable to B^S an occurrence which is synonymous with it, and vice versa. This constraint, it will be remembered, is a natural consequence of the assignment relation between occurrences and senses.

The second constraint is designed to ensure what might be called the genuineness of statements of sense-synonymy. Given that sense-synonymy statements are conceived as the merging of occurrence-synonymy statements, every statement of occurrence-synonymy is capable of being turned into a statement of sense-synonymy, unless we take steps to prevent this from happening. This is for the simple reason that however accidental an instance of occurrence-

synonymy may be, it is always possible to create or imagine circumstances where it will be duplicated. For example, we could easily make up sentences similar to (3.22) where the occurrence-synonymy between 'eat' and 'drink' is repeated. In that event, we could then merge these statements of occurrence-synonymy regarding 'eat' and 'drink' into a single statement of sense-synonymy. But somehow such statements of sense-synonymy seem to be merely 'passing for' what they purport to be. In other words, they do not seem to be genuine statements of sense-synonymy. The explanation for this is not hard to find. When we remind ourselves that there are potentially infinite levels of sense, it is easy to see that the statement of sense-synonymy between 'eat' and 'drink' is made on too low a level. By this token we may say that a genuine statement of sense-synonymy is one that is made on a sufficiently high level of sense.

Two provisions will be introduced whereby a sufficiently high level of sense might be ensured. The first provision stipulates that a hypothesis of sense-synonymy must be tested in randomly obtained sentences where at least one of the two synonymy candidates is acceptable. This provision is based on the rationale that 'accidental' synonyms are ones which are synonymous as a result of special sentential circumstances such that the same words will not be synonymous in randomly obtained sentences. Under this provision, for instance, sentences like (3.23) and (3.24) will prevent a statement of sense-synonymy from being made for 'eat' and 'drink'. For this provision to have the intended effect, however, the range of randomly obtained sentences must be narrowed down by some prior intuitive notion of what the two relevant senses are, so that lack of synonymy between such occurrences of the same two lexemes as are not assignable to the two relevant senses will not count as evidence against the sense-synonymy hypothesis. Otherwise, this provision would have the same effect on 'thrive' and 'flourish' as it has on 'eat' and 'drink'. In fact, it would automatically falsify all sense-synonymy hypotheses in the case of lexemes which fall short of lexeme-synonymy. Once we add this caveat, however, we must also admit that the very need for some prior notion of the identity of the senses somewhat weakens the present provision.

A second provision, therefore, will not be out of place. Under this provision, we postulate a lexicon and a 'grammar', both

specially designed for handling synonyms. The lexicon is such that every time a statement of sense-synonymy is made the senses in question must be entered under the lexemes to which they are respectively assignable. The 'grammar', on the other hand, consists of rules which are designed to account for, among other things, instances of accidental occurrence-synonymy. In this way, the principle of diminishing returns may be relied on to prevent 'eat' and 'drink' (and other synonyms of the third category), but not 'thrive' and 'flourish' (and other synonyms of the first category), from being covered by sense-synonymy statements.

The third and final constraint is designed to ensure what might be called the naturalness of statements of sense-synonymy. A natural statement of sense-synonymy is one that conforms approximately to native speakers' intuitions as regards the merging of occurrence-meanings into sense-meanings. By insisting on the naturalness of sense-synonymy statements, the present constraint will also serve to render sense-synonymy hypotheses amenable to falsification by preventing A° or B° (or both) in a counter instance $A^{\circ} \neq B^{\circ}$ from being assigned in an ad hoc manner to an allegedly different sense from the ones regarding which a sense-synonymy hypothesis is being tested. Let us envisage, for example, the following situation. After partial substitution tests have been carried out on a sufficiently large sample of randomly obtained sentences, it is found that two words are occurrence-synonymous in the majority of the sentences but are not occurrence-synonymous in the rest. All of the occurrences of each word in these sentences, however, are intuitively felt to be assignable to a single sense. Furthermore, there is no intuitively satisfactory way of subdividing either of the senses in question in such a way that the non-synonymous occurrences can be re-assigned. Under these circumstances, we are not permitted under the third constraint to re-assign the non-synonymous occurrences in order that we may then sum up the synonymous occurrences in the form of a statement of sense-synonymy.

Together, then, these three constraints are designed to ensure the descriptive adequacy of sense-synonymy statements resulting from sense-synonymy hypotheses. Of these three constraints, the last two clearly leave something to be desired. Until more work is done, therefore, I can only hope that the three constraints

will go some way towards achieving the end to which they are designed.

As for lexeme-synonymy statements, if we assume that lexeme-identity is unproblematic, the condition of descriptive adequacy will be satisfied provided only that these statements are legitimate. Therefore, only one constraint, parallel to the first constraint on sense-synonymy statements, is required. Under this constraint, it is legitimate to conclude that A^1 and B^1 are lexeme-synonymous if and only if for every occurrence (or sense) assignable to A^1 there is assignable to B^1 an occurrence (or sense) which is synonymous with it, and vice versa.

These four constraints, three on sense-synonymy statements and one on lexeme-synonymy statements, may be subsumed under the 'principle of descriptive adequacy'.

To this may now be added the 'principle of maximum descriptive economy', which is self-explanatory.

Now according to the former principle alone, lexeme-synonymy statements, sense-synonymy statements and occurrence-synonymy statements are equally desirable as long as they fulfil the requirement of descriptive adequacy. According to the latter principle alone, on the other hand, lexeme-synonymy statements are always to be preferred. In order to achieve the best description, therefore, we have to operate with a combination of the two principles. Thus, we aim first of all for descriptively adequate lexeme-synonymy statements; if descriptive adequacy cannot be achieved for them, we then aim for descriptively adequate sense-synonymy statements; only if descriptive adequacy cannot be achieved for sense-synonymy statements do we finally resort to occurrence-synonymy statements, whose descriptive adequacy, with regard to the identity of lexical units, can be safely taken for granted.

The forming of sense-synonymy hypotheses is, of course, complicated by the plurality of levels of sense. With the introduction of the two above-mentioned principles, however, the plurality of levels of sense will no longer pose any problems. For, in each given case where sense-synonymy statements are warranted, that level of sense will be selected which makes for the highest possible degree of descriptive economy compatible with descriptive adequacy. We said earlier in this chapter that "the selection of one level of sense rather than another in a given case will no longer be arbit-

rary because that level of sense will be selected which best serves the purpose of descriptive economy". Now this is precisely what is meant by 'which best serves the purpose of descriptive economy'.

4.6. Occurrence-synonymy statements and 'qualified' sense-synonymy statements

If the two principles are adhered to, the description of synonymy relations will consist of three categories of synonymy statements: lexeme-synonymy statements, sense-synonymy statements and occurrence-synonymy statements. The last category, however, is not homogeneous.

For the purpose of describing synonymy relations, roughly two types of occurrence-synonyms (i.e. synonyms covered by occurrence-synonymy statements alone) may be distinguished. On the one hand, there are occurrence-synonyms which end up in occurrence-synonymy statements because sense-synonymy hypotheses concerning the corresponding senses have been somewhat narrowly refuted by one or more types of counter-instances. On the other hand, there are occurrence-synonyms which end up in occurrence-synonymy statements because sense-synonymy hypotheses concerning the corresponding senses have been refuted in all but a small number of types of instances.

In view of this important difference, I would like to suggest, in the interests of descriptive economy, that a small number of types of counter-instances need not prevent us from using sense-synonymy statements, provided certain qualifications are introduced. Thus, what might be called a 'qualified' sense-synonymy statement will take the following form: " A^S and B^S are synonymous except when ...". Occurrence-synonyms of the second type, on the other hand, may be covered by occurrence-synonymy statements of the following form: " A^S (or A^L) and B^S (or B^L) are occurrence-synonymous only when ...".

While lexeme-synonymy and sense-synonymy statements (qualified or not) will be entered in the lexicon, occurrence-synonymy statements will be predicted by a rule or rules to be found in the 'grammar'. The conjunction of such rules will be of the form: " A^S (or A^L) and B^S (or B^L) are occurrence-synonymous when X_1 , when

X_2 , when X_3 ... or when X_n (where X_1 , etc. stand for relevant determining factors or causes)". These rules are directed at the circumstances under which occurrence-synonymy may arise. A general rule will be suggested in Chapter 10.

We may also find it profitable to introduce analogous rules in the 'grammar' for qualified sense-synonymy statements, to be directed at the circumstances under which occurrence-synonymy will not hold between two otherwise synonymous senses. The conjunction of these rules will take the following form: " A^S and B^S are not occurrence-synonymous when X_1 , when X_2 , when X_3 ... or when X_n ". Such rules may then be drawn upon in filling the space after "when ..." in qualified sense-synonymy statements in the lexicon. Some specific rules will be suggested in Chapter 9.

It should now be stressed that the distinction between the two types of occurrence-synonyms is motivated entirely by considerations of descriptive economy. In Chapter 8, however, we will draw a very similar distinction between two types of occurrence-synonyms, which is entirely motivated by considerations of the naturalness of explanatory statements (i.e. statements aimed at explaining the irregular behaviour of senses as regards synonymy). The two distinctions largely overlap. But where there is a difference, different considerations will prevail according to whether we are engaged in trying to make the most (descriptively adequate) economical descriptive statements of synonymy relations or in trying to offer the most natural explanatory statements of why the same two senses are sometimes synonymous and sometimes not synonymous. It should be pointed out, therefore, that the specific rules referred to at the end of each of the last two paragraphs are designed in the first place for the latter purpose and that consequently they may sometimes have to be adapted before they can be put to good use for the former purpose.

CHAPTER 5

CRITERIA OF SYNONYMY

5.1. Criteria of synonymy and lexical units

In the last two chapters our concern was with the lexical units between which synonymy is to be conceived as a meaning-relation, first with regard to the definition of synonymy and then with regard to its description. Our concern, in other words, was with the A and B in our synonymy formula, $A = B$. The way is now clear for an explication or elucidation of the equation sign in the synonymy formula. Such an explication is aimed at answering the question of what it is for two lexical units to be synonymous. In this chapter we will prepare the ground for such an explication, ending with the identification of two distinct criteria of synonymy. Then, in the next two chapters, we will consider the two criteria in turn.

The nature of our present undertaking derives in large measure from conclusions that we reached in the last two chapters. Of these conclusions, three are particularly relevant in this regard, namely: (1) a conception of synonymy should treat occurrence-synonymy as a legitimate level of synonymy; (2) a conception of synonymy should also allow for sense-synonymy and lexeme-synonymy as a means, or potential means, of achieving descriptive economy; and (3) occurrence-synonymy is the primitive, or most basic, level of synonymy, from whose characterization can be derived characterizations of sense-synonymy and lexeme-synonymy provided questions of sense-identity and lexeme-identity can be settled in advance.

In view of the first two conclusions, our task as regards the equation sign is to provide an explication of synonymy as a meaning-relation between occurrences, between senses, and between lexemes. It follows from the third conclusion, however, that to carry out this task it will be sufficient to explicate synonymy as a meaning-relation between occurrences (see, however, 7.9). On the question of lexeme-identity we may continue to assume that lexeme-identity is generally unproblematic. On the question of sense-identity we supplied an answer in the last chapter by conceiving sense-synonymy

statements as a means of achieving descriptive economy and, more specifically, by introducing the genuineness constraint and the naturalness constraint on sense-synonymy statements. We may safely confine ourselves in this and the next two chapters (except for 7.9), then, to seeking an explication of synonymy as a meaning-relation between occurrences, or, in other words, to completing the biconditional in the following statement: "A and B are synonymous in a sentence and context if and only if ...".

5.2. Preconditions of adequacy

As is to be expected, two types of approach must be ruled out from the outset. The first is exemplified by the following statement:

We can say that the sentences, "I saw a policeman," and "I saw a cop," are paraphrases of each other because the only difference between the two sentences is the substitution of the word cop for policeman and these two words are synonymous (Nilsen & Nilsen, 1975: 142).

From this we can infer the following generalization: Two words are synonymous in a sentence because they are synonymous in isolation. What is implicit in this generalization is that sentence-synonymy, where the difference between two sentences consists in the choice of a different word, is discoverable via word-synonymy. But this is question-begging unless word-synonymy can be shown to be discoverable independently of their use in sentences. The fact, however, is that word-synonymy cannot be properly established except in terms of the contribution that words make to the meaning of sentences. In other words, it is not sentence-synonymy that is deducible from word-synonymy but word-synonymy that is deducible from sentence-synonymy. The conception of word-synonymy implied by Nilsen and Nilsen must be rejected, therefore, for reasons of circularity.

In rejecting this conception, we are insisting that word-synonymy must be determined via the more basic relation of sentence-synonymy.

Equally to be rejected is any approach according to which the question of synonymy between A and B in a sentence/context is not determinable with reference to that sentence/context alone. Such an approach is founded on the assumption that two words cannot be synonymous in one sentence/context unless they are synonymous in all

sentences/contexts. We have already seen that this assumption is untenable.

For our present purpose this approach may be seen as falling into two types. The first type consists of explications of sense-synonymy or lexeme-synonymy such that they are directly derived from prior explications of some sort of occurrence-equivalence, though, needless to say, the occurrence-equivalence in question is not treated as synonymy. The 'universal interchangeability' theory clearly belongs to this type. The following are two representative pronouncements, the first by a philosopher, the second by a linguist:

Two expressions are synonymous in a language L if and only if they may be interchanged in each sentence in L without altering the truth value of that sentence (Mates, 1969: 549).

Only those words can be described as synonymous which can replace each other in any given context, without the slightest alteration either in cognitive or in emotive import (Ullmann, 1957: 108-9).

Explications like these are easily reducible to explications of occurrence-equivalence; and there is no reason why we should not adopt the latter as explications of occurrence-synonymy if they come up to our requirements of adequacy, nor is there any reason why we should not make use of them in our search for an explication of occurrence-synonymy if they do not come up to such requirements.

The second type of the approach in question comprises explications of sense-synonymy or lexeme-synonymy such that they are not directly derived from any prior explications of occurrence-equivalence. What we have here, in other words, are treatments of synonymy in which explications of the equation sign are interwoven with a particular level of lexical unit on which synonymy is conceived as a meaning-relation.

To this type belongs, for example, Harris's explication of synonymy, in which each expression is paired with one meaning and which is thus ambiguous as between lexeme-synonymy and sense-synonymy. According to Harris, for two expressions to be synonymous is for them to have identical semantic characterizations. A procedure is adopted whereby the semantic characterization of each expression is first arrived at individually for that expression and only then are the semantic characterizations of different expressions compared to determine whether the expressions are synonymous. There is thus no (direct) way in which we can reduce this

explication to some corresponding explication of occurrence-equivalence.

Another example of this second type would be an explication of synonymy (also ambiguous as between sense-synonymy and lexeme-synonymy) derivable from Firth's theory of meaning. Firth, according to Sampson (1980: 226), "equate(s) the meaning of a word with the range of verbal contexts in which it occurs". As Sampson further notes, this view of meaning is

perverse. Apart from anything else, it forces us to claim, say, that in a context such as Stop that this instant or I'll tan your _____, the word podex is as likely to occur as backside - or alternatively to deny that these words are synonymous, which by all normal criteria they are (1980: 227).

Explications of this second type, it will have become clear, represent a more radical departure from our view of synonymy than do those of the first type. As a consequence, they are of little use for our purpose.

Whichever type it may happen to fall under, however, the approach under discussion must be rejected as incompatible with occurrence-synonymy.

In rejecting this approach, we are insisting that the question as to whether A and B are synonymous in a sentence and context can and should be decided with reference to that sentence and context alone.

In the light of the foregoing it is clear that an adequate explication of occurrence-synonymy must at least fulfil two requirements: that it explicates word-synonymy via sentence-synonymy, and that it does not take us outside the sentence/context in question.

5.3. Interchangeability and sameness of meaning as two separate criteria of synonymy

The two minimal requirements specified above are fulfilled by the following definitions of synonymy:

If there is one or more environment in which two lexemes are substitutable for each other without (my underlining) any change in COGNITIVE meaning, then they are synonymous in that environment or those environments (Bennett, 1968: 158).

Synonymy can be said to occur if items are close enough in their meaning to allow a choice to be made between them in

some contexts, without (my underlining) there being any difference for the meaning of the sentence as a whole (Crystal, 1980: 345).

These definitions, it is important to note, contain two separate criteria of synonymy, the second criterion beginning with 'without' in each case. The first criterion, which we may refer to as the 'interchangeability criterion', is that A and B must be interchangeable in a sentence/context. In common parlance, 'interchangeable' is sometimes used of two words in the sense of "substitutable for each other without any change in the meaning of a particular sentence". This is clearly not the sense in which 'interchangeable' is to be construed in the two definitions in question, for otherwise there would have been no need for 'without ...' in these definitions. The second criterion may be referred to as the 'sameness of meaning criterion', which requires that the substitution of A for B and vice versa preserve the meaning of the sentence in which the substitution takes place.

It is obvious that the sameness of meaning criterion is the more important, in that it directly answers the question of what it is for two occurrences to be synonymous. Equally obvious, however, is that for two occurrences to be synonymous in a sentence/context, it must first be established that the two occurrences are in fact interchangeable in that sentence/context (i.e. that they can both occur in that sentence/context), however one may wish to define interchangeability. The two criteria, therefore, are both necessary to the explication of occurrence-synonymy: the interchangeability criterion as an indispensable preliminary, the sameness of meaning criterion as the substantive part of the explication.

There is no novelty in the identification of these two criteria. What is lacking is a generally agreed way of characterizing them.

Treatments of synonymy have in the main concentrated on the sameness of meaning criterion while the interchangeability criterion has tended to be taken for granted. This would not matter if interchangeability was a clear notion. In point of fact, however, the notion of interchangeability is far from unproblematic. As Naess reminds us:

The terms 'interchangeability' and 'exchangeability' are vague, ambiguous and mostly used without basis in any criteria applicable in research. There is no procedure established for finding out, for instance, whether

'brother' and 'male sibling' are interchangeable in English (1956: 9).

What Naess said in 1956 is perhaps still largely true today. If so, this is unfortunate, for, as we have seen, the relationship between the two criteria of synonymy is such that we cannot ask whether A and B have the same meaning in a sentence/context unless we have first established that they are interchangeable in that sentence/context. Thus the sameness of meaning criterion will be vitiated to whatever extent an unobjectionable interchangeability criterion is lacking.

As for the sameness of meaning criterion itself, it seems to me beyond doubt that the only approach that can lead to an adequate characterization is one which invokes the prior notion of bilateral implication between sentences. Here complications and controversies arise, largely as a result of the fact that, when applied to natural language, the notion of bilateral implication in turn poses difficult problems, not least because it is open to more than one interpretation. To arrive at an adequate characterization of the sameness of meaning criterion, then, what we will have to do is to provide an adequate characterization of bilateral implication as an explication of sentence-synonymy.

We are now in a position to consider the two criteria of synonymy in turn.

CHAPTER 6

CRITERIA OF SYNONYMY: 1. INTERCHANGEABILITY

6.1. Interchangeability and acceptability: varieties of acceptability

To say that A and B are interchangeable in a sentence is to say that the substitution of A for B or vice versa does not render that sentence unacceptable. (Alternatively, of course, to say that A and B are interchangeable in a sentence is to say that A and B are both acceptable, or can both occur, in a certain position in that sentence. Strictly speaking, however, this is a derivative statement, since for A or B to be acceptable in a sentence is for that sentence, of which A or B is a constituent, to be acceptable in the first place. Thus, although we may also talk about the acceptability of words in sentences as opposed to the acceptability of sentences, we can do so only derivatively.) Thus the correlative notion of interchangeability on the level of sentence is that of acceptability, and it is through the notion of sentential acceptability that an explication of lexical interchangeability must be sought.

As is well known, acceptability is a complex and far from homogeneous notion. For our present purpose four types or levels of acceptability and, by the same token, unacceptability (or anomaly) may be roughly distinguished: the grammatical, the semantic, the collocational and the situational.

We will consider grammatical acceptability first. For a sentence to remain grammatically acceptable under the substitution of A for B, it is necessary and sufficient that A and B belong to the same syntactic category or sub-category. Downright grammatical anomaly will occur, for example, if we replace 'reason' with 'because' (unless 'because' is being quoted) in

(6.1) The reason/*because is hard to explain.

Needless to say, the anomaly will be due to the fact that 'reason' and 'because' do not belong to the same syntactic category. More specifically, this may be seen as constituting a violation of categorial-component rules. Grammatical anomaly will also occur if

we replace 'bear' with 'abide' in (6.3), although in (6.2) the two words are both perfectly acceptable:

(6.2) She can't bear/abide those noisy children.

(6.3) She can't bear/*abide to see animals cruelly treated.

This time the grammatical anomaly will be due to the fact that 'abide' does not come under the sub-category of verbs which can be followed by an infinitive construction. More specifically, this may be seen as constituting a violation of rules of strict subcategorization (cf. Weinreich, 1966: 414-6).

Where to draw the line between grammatical anomaly on the one hand and semantic or collocational anomaly on the other depends on how fine one's syntactic sub-categories are. In the present treatment the line is drawn with reference to what are commonly known as co-occurrence or selection restrictions (of which more later) such that we will treat as either semantic or collocational such anomaly as is due to the breach of co-occurrence restrictions.

The distinction between semantic and collocational acceptability, as it is drawn here, is based on the prior distinction between the meaning (i.e. sense-meaning) of a sense and its co-occurrence restrictions. We will justify this latter distinction in Chapter 9. The important point for our present purpose is that the relationship between the meaning of a sense and its co-occurrence restrictions is such that the latter are often the direct result of the former. Take, for example, the substitution of 'increase' for 'improve' in

(6.4) The factory has improved/increased its output.

(6.5) The factory has improved/*increased its working conditions.

We may explain the unacceptability of 'increase' in (6.5) by saying that 'increase' requires an object capable of being construed in terms of quantity (or amount), etc., a requirement which is not fulfilled by 'working conditions' in the sentence and the implied context in question. Now this co-occurrence restriction is not gratuitous, but is entailed by the meaning of 'increase', which we may roughly characterize as "make greater in quantity, etc.".

It is equally important to note, however, that the co-occurrence restrictions of a sense need not be the direct result of its meaning. A case in point is the unacceptability of 'handsome' (with the sense-meaning of "generous") in (6.7) as opposed to its

acceptability in (6.6):

(6.6) He gave me a generous/handsome gift.

(6.7) He is generous/*handsome with his money.

As an explanation of the unacceptability of 'handsome' in (6.7), it seems safe to suggest that 'handsome' (when carrying the sense-meaning of "generous") is subject to the co-occurrence restriction that it is not directly applicable to human beings. We will have more to say about this co-occurrence restriction in Chapter 9. In the meantime, one thing is clear: it is implausible to see this co-occurrence restriction as directly resulting from the relevant sense-meaning of 'handsome'.

Having identified two types of co-occurrence restrictions, we are now in a position to offer the following characterizations of semantic acceptability and collocational acceptability.

For a sentence to remain semantically acceptable under the substitution of A for B, it is necessary and sufficient that there is no breach of such co-occurrence restrictions as are the direct result of the meaning of A.

For a sentence to remain collocationally acceptable, on the other hand, under the substitution of A for B, it is necessary and sufficient that there is no breach of A's co-occurrence restrictions, whether they are the direct result of A's meaning or not.

It should be clear from the above that collocational acceptability entails semantic acceptability, but not vice versa. Conversely, semantic anomaly entails collocational anomaly, but not vice versa. It will be convenient (particularly in Chapter 9), however, also to talk about what may be called purely collocational anomaly (or unacceptability), by which is meant collocational anomaly caused by the breach of such co-occurrence restrictions of a sense as are not the direct result of its meaning. Semantic anomaly does not entail purely collocational anomaly, nor the other way round; in fact, they are complementary.

Once we have introduced the notion of purely collocational anomaly, it may be mentioned that the distinction between semantic and purely collocational anomaly is not always easy to draw in practice. This fact becomes important when it comes to accounting for the failure of two senses to be interchangeable in certain sentences when they are interchangeable in other sentences. In Chapter 9,

where we will be concerned with this, we will adopt the general principle according to which an explanation in terms of semantic anomaly is preferable, for being more powerful, to one in terms of purely collocational anomaly and therefore the latter should be invoked only as a last resort.

We are now left with situational acceptability yet to explain. For a sentence to remain situationally acceptable under the substitution of A for B, it is necessary and sufficient that the sentence does not become inappropriate because of A's stylistic properties (e.g. formal, informal, literary, poetic, archaic, technical, dialectal). An account of stylistic properties will be given in Chapter 11. In the meantime it should be stressed that the sharing of identical stylistic properties by A and B is not a necessary condition for a sentence to remain situationally acceptable under the substitution of A for B. It is only when their stylistic properties diverge beyond a certain extent, the exact extent depending on actual situations, that A's substitution for B will render the sentence situationally anomalous.

We have just distinguished and briefly characterized four types of acceptability and anomaly. These will be discussed further and in greater detail in Chapter 9. What will occupy us for the remainder of this chapter is the more general question, now seen in a clearer light as a result of the distinction of four types of acceptability and anomaly, of how to define interchangeability as a criterion of synonymy.

6.2. Loose interchangeability and strict interchangeability

In view of the heterogeneous nature of acceptability, the notion of interchangeability cannot be taken for granted. It is essential, if we are to be 'responsible' in seeking an explication of synonymy for a natural language with the aid of the notion of interchangeability, that we spell out how many and which of the various types of acceptability of a sentence are meant to be entailed by the interchangeability of A and B in that sentence.

It should first be noted, however, that we are not free to characterize interchangeability, as a criterion of synonymy, in

just any way we like. For, in the context of explicating synonymy, to say that A and B are interchangeable in a sentence is in fact just a somewhat more technical way of saying, in more everyday language, that A and B can both occur, or can both be used, in that sentence. From this way of looking at interchangeability we may derive the following constraint on its characterization: an adequate characterization of interchangeability must be such that given any statement to the effect that A and B are interchangeable in a sentence it will not be inappropriate, or counter-intuitive, also to say that A and B can both occur in that sentence.

In treatments of synonymy the notion of interchangeability tends to be used in such a way that it seems to entail only grammatical acceptability. I say 'seems' because usually no clear indications are given. Even where grammatical acceptability or some such notion is explicitly mentioned, it is not clear, for lack of further specification, whether it is conceived as having the scope we have given it or as having broad enough a scope to subsume either what we have treated as collocational acceptability or, more narrowly, what we have treated as semantic acceptability. Whatever the case may be, there is no doubt that it would be highly counter-intuitive to regard grammatical acceptability as we conceive it as a sufficient condition of interchangeability, in view of such cases as (6.5) on the one hand and (6.7) on the other. Clearly, we do not want to say that 'increase' can occur in (6.5), nor that 'handsome' can occur in (6.7). As (6.5) and (6.7), which exhibit semantic and purely collocational anomaly respectively, combine to suggest, collocational acceptability must, if we are to avoid a highly counter-intuitive characterization of interchangeability, be treated as a necessary condition in addition to grammatical acceptability. Given the not uncommon lack of explicit statement on this matter, it is necessary to make the above point clear, but once clearly stated, this much may be taken as fairly uncontroversial.

What is (potentially) controversial is whether situational acceptability is also to be treated as a necessary condition of interchangeability. Here we find ourselves in something of a dilemma, which in fact faces anyone who invokes the notion of interchangeability and at the same time treats synonymy as purely a matter of cognitive meaning. On the one hand, it is obviously

somewhat artificial to treat A and B as both capable of occurring in a sentence when the substitution of the one for the other will render that sentence situationally unacceptable. On the other hand, if we for this reason judge A and B to be non-synonymous in the sentence, our judgement will have been interfered with by a factor which has nothing to do with cognitive meaning. Moreover, if we for the same reason judge A and B to be non-synonymous in the sentence, we will be treating as non-synonymous many lexical items which are normally treated as synonymous (e.g. 'mingy'/'avaricious' and 'pop off'/'pass away' in Ullmann's quotation immediately to follow). This dilemma is thrown into sharp relief in the following observation by Ullmann:

If ... the difference between synonyms is mainly emotive or stylistic, there may be no overlap at all: however close in objective meaning, they belong to totally different registers or levels of style and cannot normally be interchanged. It is difficult to imagine any context - except a deliberately comical or ironical one - where mingy could replace avaricious or where pop off could be substituted for pass away (1961: 143).

Our dilemma, to put it more directly, is that a drawback will arise if we do not treat situational acceptability as a necessary condition of interchangeability, while a couple of other drawbacks will arise if we do. To free ourselves from this dilemma, I propose a solution consisting of three steps. The first step is to distinguish two degrees of interchangeability, which we may refer to as 'loose' and 'strict' interchangeability respectively. Loose interchangeability entails grammatical acceptability and collocational acceptability, while strict interchangeability entails also situational acceptability. The second step, designed to avoid the two drawbacks of treating situational acceptability as a necessary condition of interchangeability and hence of synonymy, is to stipulate that for A and B to be synonymous it is necessary for them to be loosely interchangeable, but not necessary for them to be strictly interchangeable. This does not, of course, alter the fact that it is somewhat artificial to treat A and B as both capable of occurring in a sentence when they are only loosely interchangeable in that sentence. We must acknowledge this drawback of not treating situational acceptability as a necessary condition of interchangeability, which the final step is designed to remedy. This final step consists in the further stipulation that a statement of synonymy

will specify whether the synonyms in question are loosely or strictly interchangeable.

To conclude our characterization of interchangeability, here is our twofold interchangeability criterion again: A and B are loosely interchangeable in a sentence if and only if that sentence remains grammatically and collocationally acceptable under the substitution of A for B and vice versa; A and B are strictly interchangeable in a sentence if and only if that sentence remains grammatically, collocationally and situationally acceptable under the substitution of A for B and vice versa.

6.3. Judgement-interchangeability and performance-interchangeability

Having worked out an interchangeability criterion, we must now tackle a further problem, namely: judgements of acceptability (and, by the same token, interchangeability) cannot always be made with certainty. Instead of being a simple 'yes or no' matter, acceptability is in the nature of a scale on which, following Greenbaum and Quirk (1970), we should identify at least three points. In Greenbaum and Quirk's words, these are 'perfectly natural and normal', 'wholly unnatural and abnormal' and 'somewhere between' (1970: 5, 9 and 16). I have carried out some informal testing, which (for what it is worth) confirms the need to recognize a borderline category. For example, I have noticed considerable hesitancy on the part of some informants when asked to judge (via the notion of acceptability) the interchangeability of 'fast'/'rapid', 'ordinary'/'common', 'disaster'/'calamity' and 'lively'/'animated' in the following sentences (the question mark in these sentences indicates hesitancy over the acceptability of the word in question), where it seems to me reasonable to ask whether the two words in each pair are synonymous:

(6.8) It is a very fast/?rapid horse.

(6.9) He has a rapid/?fast pulse.

(6.10) Just wear your ordinary/?common clothes.

(6.11) This word is no longer in common/?ordinary use.

(6.12) Natural disasters/?calamities are unknown to this region.

(6.13) She is a (an) lively/?animated conversationalist.

We must distinguish, of course, between what we may call genuine hesitancy, which is a reflection of inherent uncertainties in the language, and what we may call trivial hesitancy, which is due merely to informants' lack of familiarity with the synonym candidates in question. Where genuine hesitancy is involved, as in the case of 'fast'/'rapid' and 'ordinary'/'common', it seems usually to lie somewhere on the borderline between semantic acceptability/anomaly and purely collocational acceptability/anomaly. If this is so, then it is hardly surprising that judgements of acceptability should often be accompanied by hesitancy. For here we are on ground where the issues involved are subtle while the intuitions available are hazy. As far as trivial hesitancy is concerned, I have not infrequently found informants to be hesitant as to the interchangeability of A and B in a sentence for the simple reason that they are not sufficiently familiar with A or B or both, or a particular use of A or B or both. The hesitancy as regards 'disaster'/'calamity' and, to a lesser extent, 'lively'/'animated' seems to be largely of this character. This is attested by the frank admission by some informants that some of the words in question are not within the vocabulary that they know well. When lack of familiarity is indeed the only or chief cause of hesitancy, it is clear that the resultant judgement should be disregarded. There is a sense in which we are better masters of grammar than of vocabulary. This fact imposes a limitation on our inquiry into interchangeability and synonymy, which no amount of ingenuity can overcome.

Leaving trivial hesitancy out of account, we have yet to decide, in the case of genuine hesitancy, whether or not A and B should be treated as interchangeable in a sentence. To do this, I will begin by drawing a distinction between acceptability as a matter of judgement and acceptability as a matter of performance (i.e. the actual use of language). We have already seen that, as a matter of judgement, acceptability is in the nature of a scale, on which we have identified three points. Having drawn the above distinction, I will treat A and B as strictly judgment-interchangeable in a sentence if and only if that sentence is judged to be 'perfectly natural and normal' under the substitution of A for B and vice versa; and I will treat A and B as loosely judgement-interchangeable in a sentence if and only if that sentence is not judged to be

'perfectly natural and normal' under the substitution and what prevents it from being judged as 'perfectly natural and normal' is lack of complete situational acceptability. Now the distinction between strict and loose interchangeability is impossible to draw in the case of performance, since when A and B are established as interchangeable in a sentence through observation of performance it must be inferred that the sentence remains acceptable under the substitution on all counts (i.e. A and B are strictly interchangeable in it). I will treat A and B as performance-interchangeable in a sentence if and only if A and B have both been observed to occur in that sentence such that the use of neither A nor B is a performance error (such as slips of tongue or pen).

It is well known that judgements of acceptability (whether elicited or volunteered) are often at variance with elicited and, to an even greater extent, spontaneous performance. Generally speaking, judgement-acceptability entails (potential) performance-acceptability, but not conversely. Thus what normally happens is that informants may judge sentences to be of dubious acceptability when these sentences have in fact been observed in their own speech.

Where judgement-acceptability and performance-acceptability diverge, we are not obliged to treat either type of acceptability as uniquely valid to the exclusion of the other. Both are valid in their own way, though, beyond saying that the former suggests more care and self-consciousness in the choice of words than the other, their respective spheres of validity are difficult to pin down.

In view of the distinction between judgement-acceptability and performance-acceptability, our interchangeability criterion needs to be slightly modified. It now stands as follows: For A and B to be synonymous in a sentence, it is necessary either that they are loosely judgement-interchangeable in that sentence or that they are performance-interchangeable in that sentence; it is not necessary that they are strictly judgement-interchangeable.

Coming back now to the question as to whether, in the case of genuine hesitancy, A and B should be treated as interchangeable in a sentence, we have already mentioned that there are (a large number of) cases where A and B fall short of judgement-interchangeability but nevertheless satisfy the requirement of performance-interchangeability. Now, as it will have become clear from our

modified interchangeability criterion, it is only in such cases that the answer is in the affirmative.

6.4. The importance of the interchangeability criterion

We have already emphasized the importance of the interchangeability criterion in the last chapter. To this emphasis we may now add that the interchangeability criterion is especially crucial under two circumstances.

In the first place, there are words such that, except in highly elliptical sentences, they will almost automatically be synonymous if and when they are interchangeable. Examples are 'entire'/'complete', 'disaster'/'calamity', 'obstacle'/'impediment' and 'fast'/'quick'. Of the last pair, for instance, it has been said that

Fast and quick largely overlap in meaning but differ in the contexts in which they can be used. Fast engine sounds more natural than quick engine and quick temper sounds better than fast temper (Kadesh et al, 1976: 214).

Now if 'fast' is acceptable in the environment of '_____ temper' and if 'quick' is acceptable in the environment of '_____ engine', then the synonymy of the two words in these environments will be virtually assured.

In the second place, it often happens that a sentence is semantically constrained in such a way that a particular place in it can be filled by almost any word or expression without changing the meaning of the sentence provided the word or expression in question does not render the sentence unacceptable.

Under both of the above circumstances, the interchangeability criterion and the sameness of meaning criterion effectively merge into one, with almost the entire weight being concentrated on our decision as to whether the synonymy candidates in question are interchangeable.

CHAPTER 7

CRITERIA OF SYNONYMY: 2. SAMENESS OF MEANING

7.1. Sameness of meaning in terms of bilateral implication

Once A and B have been established as interchangeable in a sentence, a sameness of meaning criterion is needed to determine whether or not they also have the same meaning in that sentence. To be adequate, as we pointed out in Chapter 5, the sameness of meaning criterion must be conceived in terms of bilateral implication (or entailment). The sameness of meaning criterion so conceived is based on "the systematic connection between semantic relations between statements and semantic relations between words" (Leech, 1970: 345), whereby the latter can be explicated in terms of the former. Here are two definitions of synonymy in this vein:

Synonymy may be defined in terms of bilateral implication, or equivalence. If one sentence, S_1 , implies another sentence, S_2 , and if the converse also holds, S_1 and S_2 are equivalent If now the two equivalent sentences have the same syntactic structure and differ from one another only in that where one has a lexical item, x , the other has y , then x and y are synonymous (Lyons, 1968: 450).

Two expressions are synonymous if and only if (a) they are both complete sentences and they entail one another; or (b) they are both sentence components, and when they are placed in identical sentential contexts, the resulting sentences entail one another (Blose, 1965: 310).

Although bilateral implication is often associated with what is essentially sense-synonymy, it is clearly compatible also with occurrence-synonymy. In fact, as we saw in 3.4, occurrence-synonymy is treated as a legitimate level of synonymy by both Lyons and Blose.

Our concern, let us recall, is with bilateral implication as a means of explicating occurrence-synonymy in the first place, since, as we saw in 5.1, once occurrence-synonymy has been explicated a corresponding explication of sense-synonymy and lexeme-synonymy can be arrived at in ways already set out in Chapters 3 and 4 (see also 7.9).

Straightforward though it may seem at first sight, bilateral implication is far from unproblematic. The main problem, which we

mentioned in passing in Chapter 5, lies in the fact that bilateral implication is capable of, and has in fact received, different interpretations. To provide an adequate explication of synonymy in terms of bilateral implication, therefore, we must specify exactly how we intend bilateral implication to be construed. Towards this end I will start with an examination of two accounts of bilateral implication, whose apparent similarity conceals important differences.

7.2. Leech's account of bilateral implication

The first account of bilateral implication which we will examine is by Leech. To be more precise, what we are going to examine is, in the main, part of a theory of semantic testing in which the concept of implication plays an important part. It should be noted that in the two sources that we shall examine Leech attaches relatively little importance to synonymy and bilateral implication. This fact, however, matters little for our present purpose, since Leech's treatment of hyponymy and implication lends itself easily to a fuller corresponding account of synonymy and bilateral implication. Such an account is what I will try and present, slightly amplifying Leech's own account and providing additional exemplification where necessary.

Leech's point of departure is what he calls 'basic statements', 'x is synonymous with y' being one of them:

Linguists appeal to the synonymy of sentences, to the fact that one sentence entails or presupposes another, to various types of semantic abnormality. These may be incorporated in a list of types of statement about meaning, called here BASIC STATEMENTS, which I shall treat for practical purposes as 'given' (1974: 84).

Basic statements are derived directly from linguistic intuitions as a result of codifying the latter, and they impose constraints on the material adequacy of a semantic theory. Once a range of basic statements has been isolated,

The task of semantics is then to explain such statements, by constructing theories and descriptive rules and categories from which they can be deduced (Leech, 1974: 84).

Such "theories and descriptive rules and categories" constitute in fact the formal definitions or formulations of the corresponding

basic statements. Thus, taking Leech's definition of hyponymy as a model, we may define the synonymy between two words thus: If x is a synonym of y and X and Y are two assertions identical except that X contains x where Y contains y, then X logically implies Y and conversely. Once definitions like this have been constructed, the way is open to a rigorous testing of the corresponding basic statements. The latter, as we saw earlier, are the point of departure, but after reliable test procedures have been established, intuitive judgements (i.e. instances of basic statements) must give way to test results whenever there is a conflict between the two.

Before tests can be worked out, another measure needs to be taken, for

If the results are to be truly representative of a linguistic community, such tests have to be presented in a way that can be understood by people with no technical knowledge of language. For example, it would be little use facing a representative collection of English speakers with the question 'Does sentence X entail sentence Y?', but it might well be worth while to ask them 'If sentence X is true, does sentence Y have to be true?' Hence the value of reducing questions of conceptual meaning to questions of truth and falsehood: notions which are familiar to everyone (Leech, 1974: 90-1).

What is required, as Leech would put it in more formal terms, is that definitions relating to competence (in the Chomskyan sense), like the one for synonymy given earlier, be converted into definitions relating to performance (in the Chomskyan sense). Implication is treated by Leech as a competence concept, the corresponding performance concept being that of truth. Thus, a performance definition of word-synonymy would be: Given that x is a synonym of y and X and Y are two assertions identical except that X contains x where Y contains y, then (1) if X is true, Y will also be true and conversely and (2) if X is false, Y will also be false and conversely.

The concept of truth thus assumes a central place in Leech's thinking. For Leech, semantic description, to be objective, must be backed up by semantic testing. Semantic testing, in turn, depends upon the concept of truth, for only through this performance concept can the crucial competence concept of implication, whether unilateral or bilateral, be rendered amenable to test. In this way the performance concept of truth becomes, via the competence concept

of implication, a cornerstone of Leech's theory of semantic testing. As such, it also constitutes an indispensable part of the basis of his cognitively-oriented approach to meaning.

With the addition of performance definitions, we now have at our disposal a complete rationale of semantic testing, as follows:

On the theoretical level, we have (A) general or universal categories and statements which we regard as applicable to all languages (on this level, semantic relationships such as hyponymy and synonymy are postulated); and (B) descriptive categories and statements, or interpretations of the universal categories and statements with reference to particular items in a particular language such as English. From these are derived (C) a basic statement or hypothesis relating to competence, from which is deduced a similar statement relating to performance (D). This last is interpreted as a test prediction (F) by means of a testing hypothesis (E). Finally the predicted result is matched against the actual result (G) (Leech, 1970: 351).

Now from this general rationale it will be fairly straightforward to derive a specific rationale for testing the synonymy between two words, say 'cop' and 'policeman', in a particular sentential frame, say 'He chucked a stone at the ____' (Leech's example):

- (A) Universal statement: If x is synonymous with y in S and S(x) and S(y) result from the insertion in S of x and y respectively, then S(x) implies S(y) and vice versa.
- (B) Descriptive statement: 'Cop' is synonymous with 'policeman' in 'He chucked a stone at the ____'.
- (C) 'He chucked a stone at the cops' implies 'He chucked a stone at the policemen', and vice versa.
- (D) If 'He chucked a stone at the cops' is true (or false), then 'He chucked a stone at the policemen' must be true (or false), and vice versa.
- (E) If less than 80% of the informants in an I & I test (to be explained presently) respond 'yes', the proposition that S(x) implies S(y) and vice versa is false.
- (F) At least 80% of the informants will assent to the proposition that (D).
- (G) 90% of the informants assent to the proposition that (D).
Conclusion: the prediction (F) is confirmed; therefore (B) is correct (the 90% assent is hypothetical) (cf. Leech, 1970: 352-3).

Of these steps in the rationale, only (D) actually appears as part of the 'Implication-and-Inconsistency Test' referred to in (E) above. Since synonymy is characterized by bilateral rather than unilateral implication, the same test has to be carried out twice in reverse order. Thus:

Data

S(x): He chucked a stone at the cops.

S(y): He chucked a stone at the policemen.

Instructions

- (1) Assuming S(x) is true, judge whether S(y) is true or not.
If you think S(y) must be true, write 'yes'.
If you think S(y) cannot be true, write 'no'.
If you think S(y) may or may not be true, write 'yes/no'.
If you don't know which answer to give, write '?'.
(2) Assuming S(y) is true, judge whether S(x) is true or not.
If you think S(x) must be true, write 'yes'.
If you think S(x) cannot be true, write 'no'.
If you think S(x) may or may not be true, write 'yes/no'.
If you don't know which answer to give, write '?'.

Processing

A 'yes' response in both directions is taken to be diagnostic of synonymy (cf. Leech, 1970: 345; 1974: 90-1).

On the question of the validity of tests of this kind, Leech says:

From initial experiments I have conducted, elicitation tests such as these promise to be reasonably reliable in producing clear-cut results. A 100 per cent confirmation is scarcely to be looked for, because all tests take place at the level of performance rather than competence, and so ad hoc metaphorical interpretations and other 'nuisance factors' are bound to interfere. (Such interference is inevitable seeing that the tests themselves operate at a PERFORMANCE level, whereas the phenomena being tested are factors of COMPETENCE.) Confirmation, in such a case, must be regarded as a probabilistic matter, and an 80 per cent predominance in one direction or the other is the most one can rely upon (1974: 91-2).

Hence '80%' in (E) above.

This 80% threshold serves another function in Leech's semantic theory, namely, to help distinguish between logical and factual implication. In keeping with the general practice of semanticists, Leech treats synonymy as definable in terms of logical (or analytic) bilateral implication only and not in terms of factual (or synthetic) bilateral implication. According to Leech, two words are genuinely synonymous in a sentence if and only if their synonymy has been established by virtue of logical bilateral implication alone, without the interference of factual knowledge. Thus, while 'cop' and 'policeman' are synonymous in 'He chucked a stone at the _____', 'Paris' and 'the capital of France' are not synonymous in 'Charlotte lives in _____', their sameness being a matter of factual knowledge. As is well known, the logical/factual (or, more or less synonymously, analytic/synthetic, necessary/contingent) distinction is a vexed question. Leech sees a solution to this question in the finding that

Reactions to logical implication and inconsistency appeared to be far more absolute than reactions to their factual counterparts. ... There are indications, therefore, that

the T & C and I & I tests as they stand, with 80% chosen as level of validation, already effectively differentiate logical categories from the corresponding factual categories (Leech, 1970: 358).

Thus we have what Leech calls "a behavioural criterion for the factual/logical contrast" (1970: 358). It is clearly only for this reason that Leech finds it unnecessary to introduce into the test instructions the phrase 'whatever the situation', which is used in a different type of test (cf. Leech, 1970: 344), to keep logical and factual categories apart. But 'true or false whatever the situation' is clearly the response that Leech is interested in when subjecting a synonymy hypothesis to test.

No less important than the factual/logical contrast in Leech's treatment of synonymy (and in his semantic theory as a whole) is the distinction between what he calls conceptual (i.e. cognitive) and associative meaning (cf. Leech, 1974: 10-27). For, again in keeping with general practice, Leech treats synonymy as a matter of sameness of cognitive meaning. It follows that if the kind of test described earlier is to prove successful, it must also be capable of keeping cognitive and associative meaning apart. As evidence that cognitive meaning can be successfully isolated, Leech cites the finding that

Majority score is obtainable in this test type whether or not the two statements differ markedly in style. It was assumed that the two statements

X: He cast a stone at the policemen

Y: He chucked a stone at the cops.

were cognitively synonymous, despite the contrast between a very formal and a very colloquial level of style. A 90% YES response confirmed the hypothesis 'X implies Y'. For a full confirmation of synonymy, one would have to repeat the experiment reversing this order, to check whether Y also implies X. Nevertheless, this was a tentative indication that at least in the I & I tests, stylistic factors had little or no distorting effect on the results (Leech, 1970: 357).

The difference in associative meaning between the two sentences is obviously attributable to the difference in associative meaning between 'cast' and 'chuck' and between 'policeman' and 'cop'. If so, the above finding is also implicitly taken by Leech to show that the I & I test provides a means of establishing cognitive synonymy free from the influence of differences in associative meaning. On the basis of the above finding, Leech concludes that "informants,

in making judgements about truth and falsehood, seem able to discount differences of associative (my underlining) meaning" (1974: 92). And this is taken by Leech to "support the reality of that abstraction of 'conceptual meaning' on which the present semantic approach is founded" (1974: 93).

To conclude our exposition of Leech's account of bilateral implication, we may sum up Leech's position by saying (1) that it bases bilateral implication on the concepts of truth and falsehood, (2) that it treats bilateral implication as analytic, and (3) that it tests bilateral implication by eliciting overt judgements from informants (we will read more into this third characteristic in 7.6).

7.3. Lyons's account of bilateral implication

Lyons, as we saw earlier, also defines synonymy in terms of bilateral implication. However, while Leech draws a sharp distinction between analytic and synthetic implication in order to define synonymy in terms of analytic bilateral implication, Lyons sees no need to do so. Instead:

The semantic analysis of language as it is used in everyday discourse need not wait upon the solution of the philosophical problems attaching to the distinction between contingent and necessary truth. What the linguist requires is a pragmatic concept of analyticity - one which gives theoretical recognition to the tacit presuppositions and assumptions in the speech-community and takes no account of their validity within some other frame of reference assumed to be absolute or linguistically and culturally neutral. It was for this purpose that we introduced earlier the notion of the restricted context (Lyons, 1968: 445).

'Restricted contexts' are defined by Lyons as

Those in which the participants in a conversation do not draw upon their previous knowledge of one another or the 'information' communicated in earlier utterances, but where they share the more general beliefs, conventions and presuppositions governing the particular 'universe of discourse' in the society to which they belong (1968: 419).

Here already there emerges an important difference between Leech's position and that of Lyons. For Leech, synonymy, as defined via bilateral implication, is a meaning-relation which holds 'whatever the situation'. Lyons, on the other hand, treats implication and, by the same token, synonymy as relative to the restricted context

consisting, as we have just seen, of "the more general beliefs, conventions and presuppositions" involved.

In fact, this difference seems to go much further. Recourse to the notion of the restricted context is treated by Lyons only as "a matter of methodological decision" (1968: 420). For under the normal circumstances of communication restricted contexts

... are comparatively rare, since most utterances depend for their understanding upon the information contained in previous utterances. We must not lose sight of the relationship between utterances and particular contexts (Lyons, 1968: 419).

Thus, although methodologically implication may be treated as relative to the restricted context (as in Lyons, 1968), theoretically (as well as methodologically where circumstances permit) it is to be determined with reference to all the relevant features which make up the context of situation in question (as in Lyons, 1963). Lyons refers to his concept of context-bound implication as 'pragmatic implication' and his concept of context-bound bilateral implication as 'pragmatic equivalence' (1963: 88).

How, then, does Lyons propose to test whether bilateral implication holds between two sentences in a particular context of situation? Implication, as Leech points out, is not directly testable. It is therefore necessary to reduce it to one or more primitive concepts. For Leech,

Implication, a relation between two assertions, is reducible to judgements of truth value, in many respects the "safest" of all starting-points for semantic investigation. One assertion \underline{X} implies another assertion \underline{Y} within a given language L , if the speakers of L are agreed that if \underline{X} is true, \underline{Y} cannot be false (1969: 9).

In Lyons's (1963, 1968) theory, on the other hand, there is no recourse to the concept of truth (see, however, Lyons, 1977: 204). Instead,

Both pragmatic implication and pragmatic equivalence can be defined in terms of assertion and denial. And within linguistics the notions of 'assertion' and 'denial' are to be accepted as postulates (1963: 88).

One sentence, \underline{S}_1 , is said to imply another \underline{S}_2 ... if speakers of the language agree that it is not possible to assert explicitly \underline{S}_1 and to deny explicitly \underline{S}_2 (1968: 445).

This difference is significant, particularly in that it matches a difference in testing methods (see next paragraph), which in turn not only leads to different test results but, even more importantly,

is symptomatic of a difference as regards the conception of bilateral implication and synonymy, as we shall see in 7.6.

Using as illustration the two sentences 'We have a wide range of cigars' and 'We have a wide selection of cigars', Lyons proposes the following testing method:

The question now is to decide whether the forms range and selection have the same meaning in these utterances. This does not simply consist in asking the informant; for this would be merely to invite him to invent some difference - say, for example, that the use of selection implies that he has chosen his stock with care. But the problems connected with testing the informant's response to the substitution of the two items in the frame, though they exist, are problems of a practical nature, as are the problems of devising tests for identifying variants in phonology. The aim is to inveigle the informant, without prejudice to the issue, into accepting or refusing to accept utterance a as a 'repetition' of utterance b. If a has not the same meaning as b it will either not imply something which b implies or imply something which b does not imply (1963: 76).

Here we see a further respect, referred to in the last paragraph, in which Lyons's position differs from that of Leech. While Leech resorts to overt judgement tests, Lyons regards overt judgement tests as distorting and favours instead the use of performance tests through the elicitation of actual performance in an oblique fashion. Although Leech does not approach informants with the direct question as to whether two sentences have the same meaning, it seems clear that his indirect approach via the notion of truth would be seen in the light of Lyons's observations quoted above as equally open to the danger that it will encourage informants to 'invent' differences which are not relevant in everyday communication (cf. Lyons, 1963: 76).

To conclude our exposition of Lyons's account of bilateral implication, we may sum up Lyons's position by saying (1) that it bases bilateral implication on the concepts of assertion and denial, (2) that it treats bilateral implication as pragmatic, and (3) that it tests bilateral implication by obliquely eliciting actual performance from informants (we will read more into this third characteristic in 7.6).

It will have emerged that in their respective accounts of bilateral implication Leech and Lyons differ in three prominent respects, which we may conveniently refer to as (1) truth/falsehood versus assertion/denial, (2) analytic versus pragmatic equivalence, and

(3) judgement versus performance equivalence (we will, however, see this third difference in a new light in 7.6). As it will become clear in the next few sections, the first set of alternatives is essentially a matter of method (although it is linked with the third set), while the other two sets of alternatives represent fundamental differences as regards the conception of bilateral implication and synonymy. We said earlier that bilateral implication is open to different interpretations. Now (2), (3) and, to a lesser extent, (1) present us with, broadly speaking, what I believe to be the major sets of alternatives. Our next task, then, will be to decide which alternative in each set, particularly (2) and (3), to choose. From the conjunction of our choices will emerge our sameness of meaning criterion.

To guide our choice, two criteria should be borne in mind, both of which derive from our concern with synonymy as a phenomenon in everyday communication. The first criterion is that a characterization of bilateral implication must be compatible with occurrence-synonymy - that is, with the conception of synonymy as sentence-bound and context-bound. When a particular sentence/context is in question, a second criterion is required, namely: a characterization of bilateral implication must conform to such standards of exactitude as operate in everyday communication, as opposed to those operating in some artificial situation. Needless to say, a characterization of bilateral implication must also be adequate from an operational point of view.

7.4. Truth/falsehood versus assertion/denial

There are three problems with Leech's use of the concepts of truth and falsehood as the means of testing bilateral implication. These problems arise largely from an operational point of view.

What may be questioned first, on Leech's own terms, is that "informants, in making judgements about truth and falsehood, seem able to discount differences of associative meaning" (Leech, 1974: 92). It will be remembered that the evidence cited in support of this claim is that 'He cast a stone at the policemen' and 'He chucked a stone at the cops' were judged to be (cognitively)

synonymous "despite the very different stylistic meanings of the two sentences" (Leech, 1974: 93). There is no reason to question the evidence as such, but all the evidence shows is that differences of stylistic meaning are discounted in judgements about truth and falsehood. This is not yet to say, as Leech appears to do, that the same must apply to associative meaning as a whole. For in Leech's typology of meaning (1974: 10-27) stylistic meaning is but one type of associative meaning, which also includes, among other types, 'affective meaning' and 'reflected meaning'.

Leech characterizes affective meaning by saying that "language can also reflect the personal feelings of the speaker, including his attitude to the listener, or his attitude to something he is talking about" (1974: 18). In the light of this characterization, it is doubtful that differences of affective meaning can be successfully discounted, if at all, in judgements about truth and falsehood. Pairs of words such as 'slim'/'skinny', 'brave'/'fool-hardy' and 'trustful'/'credulous', for example, are commonly treated as differing in affective meaning alone. It also seems in keeping with Leech's characterization of affective meaning to treat them in this way. Now it seems reasonable to predict that lay informants will tend to respond with 'no' (or possibly 'yes/no') rather than 'yes' to the question, say, as to whether, given that 'She is slim' is true, 'She is skinny' must also be true and vice versa, in which case truth/falsehood judgements will have failed to discount differences of affective meaning.

The reason for the failure lies in the distinction between truth as an everyday notion and truth as a technical concept in terms of truth conditions. To clarify this distinction, we need to invoke another distinction, the distinction between what is overtly stated and what is presupposed in a statement, where a speaker's "attitude to the listener, or his attitude to something he is talking about", which is a matter of affective meaning, belongs to what is presupposed (cf. Wilson, 1975: 113-52). Now while in the technical concept of truth what is overtly stated is distinguished from what is presupposed in a statement and is treated alone as bearing on truth conditions, no such distinction exists in the everyday notion of truth. It follows that differences of affective meaning cannot be discounted by truth/falsehood judgements if truth

is taken in its everyday sense. The trouble is that only the everyday notion of truth is available to Leech for his truth/falsehood tests, and it is with this everyday notion of truth in mind that, in the last paragraph, I cast doubt on the claim that truth/falsehood judgements are not influenced by affective meaning. It is true that differences of affective meaning are discounted under the operation of the technical concept of truth conditions, but this technical concept is not fit for Leech's purpose. For if what is stated were to be distinguished from what is presupposed in questions put to informants in judgement tests, the distinction would lead to very considerable complication and would in all probability cause the tests to fail the criterion of intelligibility to lay informants, on which Leech rightly insists.

Reflected meaning, as Leech defines it, is "the meaning which arises in cases of multiple conceptual meaning, when one sense of a word forms part of our response to another sense" (1974: 19). Here doubts must be raised as to whether differences of reflected meaning can always be discounted in judgements about truth and falsehood. What gives rise to such doubts is the fact that there need not always be a sharp line between cognitive and reflected meaning. In fact, there may well be disagreement as to whether a particular difference consists in the former or the latter.

Take, for example, 'on' and 'about', of which Bennett says:

The prepositions on and about can both mean 'on the subject of' and yet there is a difference in meaning between a book on astronomy and a book about astronomy. The former suggests a more serious, scholarly work than the latter.

I would now like to propose a third definition of synonymy, which it seems to me corresponds to a fairly widespread use of the term.

DEFINITION 3. If there is one or more environment in which two lexemes are substitutable for each other without any change in COGNITIVE meaning, then they are synonymous in that environment or those environments.

According to this definition ... on and about (in the environment a book ... astronomy) are synonymous, because the difference in meaning is ... 'reflected' (1968: 158).

This alleged difference in reflected meaning is attributed by Bennett to the fact that "the spatiotemporal sense of on and about describe a precise or an approximate relationship respectively, cf. on or about October 1" (1968:). Now if the difference in question is indeed one of reflected meaning, it seems doubtful that it will

be discounted in judgements about truth and falsehood. Indeed, it would be perfectly possible to assert 'I've written a book about astronomy' while denying 'I've written a book on astronomy'.

Our next example of difference in reflected meaning comes from Hofmann:

Leech (1974) has discussed a variety of meaning called reflected meaning, which I shall extend a bit. The expectational meaning of a word, even though its descriptive meaning is well established, may influence or temper the meaning of a word somewhat. Thus large & grand both seem bigger than big because of their vowels (1976: 14).

Here again insofar as Hofmann is right, 'They live in a large house', say, does not have to be true even if 'They live in a big house' is true. If, on the other hand, both of these statements turn out to have to be true or false at the same time, then the difference in reflected meaning between 'big' and 'large' indicated by Hofmann will have been shown not really to exist.

There are undoubtedly examples of synonymy candidates, such as 'cock' and 'rooster', where judgements about truth and falsehood concerning the statements in which they occur will not be affected by their difference in reflected meaning. But what we have here is reflected meaning of a rather crude kind. Reflected meaning can be much more subtle, and at some point along the line it becomes difficult to tell whether the difference is indeed one of reflected meaning or in fact one of cognitive meaning.

Take, for example, the following pairs of sentences:

- (7.1) (a) Our school boasts a fine swimming-pool.
(b) Our school has a fine swimming-pool.
- (7.2) (a) The newscaster sports a red tie whenever he reads the news.
(b) The newscaster wears a red tie whenever he reads the news.
- (7.3) (a) I have great faith in his abilities.
(b) I have great confidence in his abilities.
- (7.4) (a) Vienna is celebrated as a centre of music.
(b) Vienna is famous as a centre of music.
- (7.5) (a) I've never met anyone so dumb.
(b) I've never met anyone so stupid.

Are the two statements in each pair such that they have to be true or false at the same time? The answer that is quite likely to

emerge from the kind of test proposed by Leech will be 'yes/no' for at least some of these pairs. In the event of a 'yes/no' answer, the cause would quite plausibly be attributable to one or more senses of the one lexeme not shared by the other lexeme. But this is only to show that there is often no sharp line between cognitive meaning and reflected meaning.

From the nature of the relationship between cognitive and reflected meaning, two points follow. First, from the fact that the difference between two senses is somehow 'reflected', it will be erroneous to automatically infer that they must be synonymous. In his handling of 'on' and 'about' Bennett seems to have committed this error. Second, and more importantly, if we take into account the all-pervasiveness of reflected meaning - where there is polysemy, there is reflected meaning - it is easy to see that in Leech's characterization of synonymy, with its insistence on analytic equivalence and its reliance on overt judgement tests, reflected meaning acts as an important factor in preventing otherwise perfectly legitimate instances of synonymy from being treated as such. We will come back to this point in 7.6.

All this is not to object to Leech's postulation of affective or reflected meaning, nor yet to object to Leech' use of truth/falsehood judgements in testing synonymy hypotheses, although we will raise this objection later. What we have argued is that judgements about truth and falsehood cannot be relied on to distinguish cognitive meaning from two types of associative meaning as the distinction is drawn by Leech. Insofar as this argument is valid, we have uncovered a gap between Leech's test concepts on the one hand and his cognitively-oriented approach to meaning and synonymy on the other. To bridge this gap, either the test concepts or the conception of cognitive meaning and cognitive synonymy will have to be modified.

The second problem with the concept of truth as the means of testing bilateral implication is its limited applicability. In the first place, it is applicable only to sentences, but not generally applicable to longer stretches of discourse; in fact, even as regards sentences, the concept of truth becomes less applicable as they increase in complexity. In the second place, with regard to sentences, it is applicable only to statements, but

not to imperatives, interrogatives and so on (cf. Davidson, 1967: 311).

As far as longer stretches of discourse are concerned, it might be suggested that the problem can be solved by taking the sentences concerned out of their context and judging them in isolation. But this would constitute a departure from occurrence-synonymy (i.e. a breach of our first criterion).

With regard to sentences other than statements, a solution might be put forward whereby every such sentence is converted into its corresponding statement and then judged as a statement. Such a solution, however, would equally amount to a departure from occurrence-synonymy.

There might be yet a further approach to the problem, according to which neither longer stretches of discourse nor sentences other than statements pose any difficulties, since to determine whether A and B are synonymous it is sufficient to test them in one pair of statements. This is the approach that Leech seems to imply. For this approach to work, however, we have, firstly, to conceive A and B as senses or lexemes and, secondly, to assume that A and B will be synonymous in all sentences/contexts if they have been established as synonymous in one sentence/context. While the first move would constitute a departure from occurrence-synonymy, the second move would be completely unwarranted (see Chapters 9 and 10).

We come now to the third problem with the concept of truth as the means of testing bilateral implication. It is this: even when we are only concerned with statements, the concept of truth is far from always clear. It is perhaps more accurate to say that even though truth and falsehood are "concepts which seem to have a fairly definite purport for all psychologically normal users of the language" (Leech, 1974: 87) judgements about truth and falsehood are often made uncertain, to a greater or lesser extent, by the semantic vagueness of the words under focus.

The reason for this uncertainty is easy to appreciate. On the one hand, in order to judge with certainty whether two statements are true or false at the same time, one has to know implicitly (i.e. in the sense of "know how") the necessary and sufficient conditions that each statement is required to satisfy to be counted as true. When the two statements differ formally only in the choice of one

word at the same point in their structure - and this is the situation that concerns us - the knowledge in question boils down to that of the necessary and sufficient conditions that each word is required to satisfy to be correctly applied (cf. Rynin, 1966: 128-31; Blose, 1965: 305). On the other hand, such knowledge, as is well known, is in many cases inherently unavailable in natural language (cf. Black, 1949; Carnap, 1955; Scheffler, 1979; Tarski, 1956; Waismann, 1945).

In this regard, the certainty with which 'He cast a stone at the policemen' and 'He chucked a stone at the cops' are judged to have the same truth value can give a rather misleading impression to the contrary. One must not overlook the fact that the two pairs of words under focus - 'cast'/'chuck' and 'policeman'/'cop' - have denotata of an easily observable kind. In fact, both sentences fall well within the narrow range of what have been called observation sentences (cf. Rynin, 1966).

Earlier we saw the difficulty of distinguishing between cognitive and reflected meaning with references to sentences (7.1) to (7.5). This difficulty, we may now point out, is due entirely to the semantic vagueness of the words under focus in those sentences. In addition to (7.1) to (7.5), now consider how informants might respond to questions about truth and falsehood when confronted with the following:

- (7.6) (a) He has a fast gait.
- (b) He has a rapid gait.
- (7.7) (a) He has no aim in life.
- (b) He has no purpose in life.
- (7.8) (a) Their friendship ended in disaster.
- (b) Their friendship ended in calamity.
- (7.9) (a) She looked very cheerful when I last saw her.
- (b) She looked very happy when I last saw her.
- (7.10) (a) I derive great joy from going to concerts.
- (b) I derive great pleasure from going to concerts.
- (7.11) (a) He is from a rich family.
- (b) He is from a wealthy family.
- (7.12) (a) She is a pretty girl.
- (b) She is a good-looking girl.

Since we have not subjected these pairs of statements to Leech's

type of test, we cannot be sure what the results would be. But it seems reasonable to predict that, given a combination of the artificiality of the test situation and the strict instructions (i.e. 'If you think S(y) must be true, write "yes"'), uncertainty is likely to lead to '?' or 'yes/no' responses. In the event of such responses, of course, the prediction regarding the synonymy of the two words in question will have been proved wrong.

By giving '?' responses, informants directly register their uncertainty. Admittedly, '?' responses as such do not vitiate Leech's use of the concept of truth as the means of testing bilateral implication. They do so, however, from two specific points of view. First, vagueness of meaning is widespread in the vocabulary of English; it is thus to be expected that '?' responses or 'yes/no' responses or both would be common in Leech's type of test. If we assume '?' responses to be common, it must be said that no test can be regarded as fully satisfactory which produces a large number of uncertain responses. Secondly, '?' responses in judgement tests need not entail a corresponding experience of uncertainty in everyday communication: they are sometimes due, as we have already hinted, to a combination of the artificiality of the test situation and the strict test instructions. Where this is the case, Leech's type of test must be rejected, as far as the nature of our inquiry into synonymy is concerned, for failing to reflect what happens in everyday communication (i.e. it is a breach of our second criterion). We will return to this point in 7.6.

In the case of 'yes/no' responses, what happens is that the semantic vagueness of the words under focus leads informants to deny their synonymy. It is not difficult to see why this should happen: given, on the one hand, the greater or lesser degree of semantic vagueness attaching to the words in question and, on the other hand, the ever-present possibility of further differentiation within what is broadly the same denotatum, it is tempting to see the two words in each pair as the vehicle of such differentiation and thus to attribute some (nebulous) difference, in degree or quality, to their meaning (cf. Wimsatt, 1954: 196-7). In this regard, Ullmann rightly singles out "the vagueness of the sense" as one of "two forces (which) militate against complete synonymy" (1957: 108; cf. also Ullmann, 1962: 142). Now, as with '?'

responses, 'yes/no' responses in judgement tests need not reflect what happens in everyday communication, for the differences thus perceived are sometimes absent from everyday communication and are brought into informants' awareness only by a combination of the artificiality of the test situation and the strict test instructions. In such cases, Leech's type of test must be rejected, as far as the nature of our inquiry into synonymy is concerned, for giving scope to the imagination for perceiving differences which are absent from everyday communication (i.e. it is a breach of our second criterion). We will come back to this point in 7.6.

These, then, are the three problems with Leech's use of the concepts of truth and falsehood as the means of testing bilateral implication. It may now be asked whether they also apply to Lyons's use of assertion and denial as the means of testing bilateral implication. The answer as regards each problem is 'no'.

The first problem does not exist for assertion and denial for the simple reason that in Lyons's account of bilateral implication assertion and denial are not assigned the job of distinguishing cognitive meaning from affective meaning on the one hand or from reflected meaning on the other. In fact, no prior distinctions are drawn between different types of meaning. As far as affective meaning is concerned, however, it should be mentioned that we must interpret Lyons as implicitly acknowledging that what Leech refers to as affective meaning can bear on bilateral implication. For, to take up again an example used earlier, one can perfectly well assert 'She is slim' while denying 'She is skinny', and vice versa, in which case a difference in affective meaning will have prevented 'slim' and 'skinny' from being treated as synonymous in this sentence.

As regards the second problem, unlike the concepts of truth and falsehood, assertion and denial are flexible enough to be applicable not only to all types of sentences but also to longer stretches of discourse. For it is perfectly possible to "inveigle the informant, without prejudice to the issue, into accepting or refusing to accept utterance a as a 'repetition' of utterance b" (Lyons, 1963: 76) regardless of whether a and b are statements or other types of sentences, and regardless of whether they are sentences or longer stretches of discourse.

The third problem with Leech's use of the concepts of truth and falsehood as the means of testing bilateral implication, it will be remembered, is twofold: that the semantic vagueness of many words results in too large a number of uncertain responses, and that it can lead to the perception of differences between synonymy candidates which are absent from everyday communication. It will also be remembered that both these consequences arise only because of two additional factors, i.e. the artificiality of the test situation and the strict test instructions. Now since Lyons uses assertion and denial in the oblique elicitation of performance in actual communication, neither of the two additional factors is present in his method of testing bilateral implication. And so it follows that Lyons's use of assertion and denial does not incur either of the two consequences which constitute the third problem for Leech. We will pursue this point further in 7.6.

7.5. Analytic versus pragmatic equivalence

Lyons, in treating bilateral implication as a matter of pragmatic equivalence, holds, as we have seen, that synonymy and bilateral implication must be relativized not only to the actual world but also to the actual context. It is only natural, therefore, that synonymy, in Lyons's view,

arises in particular contexts as a consequence of the more fundamental structural relations, hyponymy and incompatibility. It frequently happens that the distinction between two lexical items is contextually neutralized. For instance, the difference between the marked term bitch and the unmarked term dog is neutralized in a context, like My _____ has just had pups, which determines the animal referred to as female (1968: 452).

Another natural consequence of defining synonymy in terms of pragmatic rather than analytic equivalence is that

The structural determination of a lexical item may be probabilistic rather than absolute. For instance, the substitution of buy for get in I'll go to the shop and get some bread would not generally be held to introduce any additional implications: buy and get would normally be taken as synonymous in this context. The standard conventions and presuppositions of the society are such that, unless there is some evidence to suggest the contrary, it will be assumed that what is obtained from a shop is obtained by

purchase. At the same time, it must be admitted that get is not necessarily synonymous with buy (even with the syntagmatic support of from the shop) (Lyons, 1968: 453).

In sharp contrast with Lyons, Leech adopts, as we have seen, analytic equivalence as the criterion of synonymy. In so doing, Leech seems to be following the practice of those philosophers who treat meaning with reference to 'all possible worlds'. At the very least, Leech insists, as his criterion of synonymy, on bilateral implication in all possible situations in the actual world. Thus Leech's characterization of synonymy, via his concept of analytic equivalence, departs from occurrence-synonymy by taking us outside the immediately relevant context, though, somewhat curiously, it does not, unlike most characterizations of synonymy that depart from occurrence-synonymy, take us outside the immediately relevant sentence.

It will be obvious, then, that, under Leech's definition of synonymy in terms of analytic equivalence, the fact that 'I'll go to the shop and get some bread' does not imply 'I'll go to the shop and buy some bread' in all possible situations means that 'get' and 'buy' cannot be synonymous in any situation. By the same token, 'dog' and 'bitch' will not be regarded as synonymous in 'My _____ has just had pups' (where 'have' is used in the sense of "give birth to"), either. For, with a stretch of the imagination, it is conceivable that in some possible world 'My dog has just had pups' does not imply 'My bitch has just had pups' (cf. Palmer, 1976: 64-5).

Having contrasted analytic and pragmatic equivalence side by side, we should now be in no doubt that of the two alternatives only pragmatic equivalence is compatible with occurrence-synonymy. By subscribing to pragmatic equivalence, we hold that bilateral implication must be bound to sentence and context. Subscribing to pragmatic equivalence in this sense, however, need not commit us to accepting Lyons's view (though we will accept this view in practice), seen earlier, that a superordinate term and a hyponym on the one hand (e.g. 'get'/'buy') and an unmarked term and a marked term on the other (e.g. 'dog'/'bitch') are to be treated as synonymous in contexts where the difference between the two terms in each case is neutralized. We will return to this point in 7.7.

7.6. Judgement versus performance equivalence

We have already touched on the third set of alternatives (i.e. judgement versus performance equivalence) at a number of points in 7.3 and 7.4. I will now bring these observations together and see them, along with further observations, in a new light.

We saw in 7.3 that Lyons treats bilateral implication as reducible to the primitive concepts of assertion and denial. These concepts lend themselves naturally to, though they do not entail, performance tests, which Lyons favours. We saw in 7.2 that Leech, on the other hand, treats bilateral implication as reducible to the primitive concepts of truth and falsehood. These concepts lend themselves equally naturally to, though they do not entail, judgement tests, which Leech uses.

Lyons's performance tests and Leech's judgement tests, as we mentioned in passing, yield different test results as to whether two sentences imply each other and whether two synonymy candidates are in fact synonymous. More precisely, Leech's judgement tests, by a combination of the artificiality of the test situation and the strict test instructions, impose conditions of bilateral implication and synonymy which are harder to meet than those required by Lyons's performance tests. We specifically drew attention to this point, in 7.4, with reference to the widespread vagueness of meaning, of which reflected meaning is an important cause. It should now be stressed that, although vagueness of meaning is no doubt particularly conducive to the falsification of synonymy hypotheses in Leech's judgement tests, Lyons's performance tests and Leech's judgement tests can give different results regardless of whether the synonymy candidates involved are semantically vague. Some exemplification may be necessary.

For this purpose, let us look at two versions of the ending to the following story:

Introduction

A boastful king had one courtier who was his great friend, and to whom he confided his most delicate secrets. One of his favorite topics was the beauty of his queen, a lady of unparalleled modesty. The courtier politely agreed with his royal master's eulogies, but never with enough enthusiasm to satisfy the monarch.

"He must see for himself", the king decided. So he

insisted upon his friend's hiding behind a door in the corner of the royal bedchamber. The courtier, not liking the idea, at last very grudgingly obeyed; and the queen saw him when he was slinking from the bedroom.

She was outraged. Next day she sent for the courtier and gave him the choice of two courses. Either he must kill the king, or he must die himself. She would never tolerate her present disgrace. What was the courtier's decision?

Ending (first version)

The bewildered courtier begged her not to bind him to so terrible a choice. But since he could not persuade her, and he realized that he had either to kill or be killed, he considered it more advisable to remain alive. "Your Majesty," quoth he, "since you pitilessly compel me to take the life of my king, let me hear the manner in which we shall set upon him." "Of a truth," replied she, "our treason shall be performed on the very spot where he shamed me. The assault shall be given when he is asleep." The wretched courtier, unable to escape this predicament, obliged to kill or to be killed, went with the queen to her room, and stood secretly in the corner; afterwards emerged and assassinated the king, thus winning his spouse and his kingdom.

Ending (second version)

The dumbfounded gentleman entreated her not to hold him to such a hard condition. Yet as all his arguments were in vain, and he saw that it was necessary to slay or be slain, he deemed it better to live himself. "My Lady," said he, "as you force me without mercy to become guilty of the blood of my sovereign, tell me by what means the deed must be accomplished." "In sooth," she answered, "the treachery must be effected in the same place in which he betrayed me. The attack must be made while he is sleeping." The poor gentleman, placed in this dreadful dilemma of having to slay or be slain, followed his lady to her chamber and hid behind the door; whence later he came out and murdered his sovereign, and gained both his lady and his crown. (taken from Walpole, 1961: 107-8)

Walpole comments:

When we come to discussing the difference between the two endings, there is little to discuss. They are the same. The same pictures or events or ideas came to the reader's mind in both cases - if he really read them referentially, remembering that words are not things and using his thoughts to build up pictures of the referents (1961: 109).

Though we may be critical of the view of meaning underlying these remarks, Walpole's main point is clearly valid. That is to say, the two versions of the ending relate essentially the same story despite a very considerable difference from a formal point of view. They are, as it were, repetitions of each other.

However, since what we are concerned with is word-synonymy in

otherwise identical environments, the two endings do not exactly illustrate our point. They differ, as is obvious, not only in vocabulary but also in structure. However, it is perfectly easy, on the basis of the second version, to create a third version which differs from the first in choice of vocabulary alone, thus:

Ending (third version)

The dumbfounded courtier entreated her not to hold him to so hard a condition. But since he could not persuade her, and he saw that he had either to slay or be slain, he deemed it better to remain alive. "Your Majesty," said he, "since you pitilessly force me to take the life of my king, let me hear the manner in which we shall set upon him." "Of a truth," replied she, "our treachery shall be effected on the same spot where he betrayed me. The attack shall be made when he is asleep." The poor courtier, unable to escape this dilemma, obliged to slay or to be slain, went with the queen to her chamber, and stood secretly in the corner; and afterwards came out and murdered the king, thus gaining his lady and his crown.

Now to the extent that the story-teller will not 'deny' the third version if he has 'asserted' the first version, then all the corresponding sentences will have passed Lyons's performance tests and must therefore be taken to imply each other. To the same extent, it follows that all the following pairs of items are synonymous in this story:

bewilder/dumbfound, beg/entreat, bind/hold, terrible/hard, choice/condition, realize/see, kill/slay, consider/deem, more advisable/better, compel/force, treason/treachery, perform/effect, very/same, shame/betray, assault/attack, give/make, wretched/poor, predicament/dilemma, room/chamber, emerge/come out, assassinate/murder, win/gain, spouse/lady, kingdom/crown.

However, it is very likely that at least some of these pairs of items - for example, 'terrible'/'hard', 'more advisable'/'better', 'shame'/'betray', 'predicament'/'dilemma' - will fail Leech's judgement tests of synonymy. And, in the event of their failing, this would no doubt be due to the combination of the artificiality of the test situation and the strict test instructions.

By way of further accounting for this divergence of test results, I shall postulate what may be called a 'rule' of everyday communication. Now a great deal of our language activity consists in recounting what we have heard or read. In the course of our everyday use of language, we convey messages, retell stories, pass on information and engage in countless other similar activities.

There is a sense in which in all these activities what we are doing is repeating what somebody else has said in our own words. It is true that we use not only our own vocabulary but also our own structures and that in most cases our sentences do not neatly match the sentences of which, as a whole, they are intended as a 'repetition', but this does not affect the point being made here. The point is that at work in such activities is a tacit rule whereby there is plenty of room for linguistic manoeuvre, as it were, before we become guilty of misrepresentation. Those who are too quick to spot differences are open to the charge of being pedantic and hair-splitting or else of being engaged in mere word play. These charges are tantamount to saying that a 'rule' of everyday communication has been broken.

It seems to me that when Lyons says that "the aim is to inveigle the informant, without prejudice to the issue, into accepting or refusing to accept utterance a as a 'repetition' of utterance b" (1963: 76), the aim, to be more explicit, is to ensure that this 'rule' of everyday communication will not be broken. In Leech's judgement tests, on the other hand, the 'rule' is broken by the strict test instructions, a violation which is compounded by the artificiality of the test situation. The strictness (of the test instructions) that I have in mind lies in the unqualified use of the word 'must', to which can be roughly attributed two distinguishable effects. One effect is ensuring analytic as opposed to pragmatic equivalence; where this effect is concerned, 'must' may be interpreted as "whatever the situation". The other effect is alerting informants to the slightest difference between synonymy candidates (in the context in question or otherwise); where this effect is concerned, 'must' may be interpreted as "strictly speaking". It is particularly by virtue of this second effect that the 'rule' of everyday communication ceases to operate. And once this rule is thus removed, the way is open to perceiving differences between words which normally go unnoticed in everyday communication.

We have been talking about the difference between Lyons's performance tests and Leech's judgement tests. But tests, however they are designed, are but means to an end. There is reason to believe that this difference in means is symptomatic of a difference in ends. By a difference in ends I mean a difference in the way in

which Lyons and Leech conceive bilateral implication and synonymy. Lyons does not just test bilateral implication and synonymy through the elicitation of spontaneous performance: he conceives bilateral implication and synonymy as a matter of spontaneous performance. Leech, on the other hand, does not just test bilateral implication and synonymy through the elicitation of strict judgements: he conceives bilateral implication and synonymy as a matter of strict judgement. It is this difference in conception, rather than the difference in testing methods as such, that is precisely meant by the distinction between performance equivalence and judgement equivalence.

We have already seen that Leech's judgement tests depart from the conception of synonymy as a phenomenon in everyday communication. By straightforward inference, the same must now be said of Leech's concept of judgement equivalence. As our concern is with synonymy as a phenomenon in everyday communication, we must reject both.

It should be stressed, however, that what we reject in principle is Leech's concept of judgement equivalence; we reject his judgement tests only derivatively: not because of their status as judgement tests as such, but because their results reflect judgement equivalence. By the same token, what we subscribe to in principle is Lyons's concept of performance equivalence; we accept his performance tests only derivatively: not because of their status as performance tests as such, but because their results reflect performance equivalence. I want now to show that it is possible to make judgement tests reflect performance equivalence and to sketch the lines on which they may be designed.

e/ If, as we have implied above, tests are to be judged not by their form (as long as they are operationally adequate) but by seeing whether their results reflect performance equivalence, there is no reason why we should not use judgement tests (or different performance tests from Lyons's, for that matter), provided they can be so designed as to reflect performance equivalence. The motivation behind this observation is that if adequate judgement tests can be found they will have the advantage over performance tests of generally being easier to carry out. How, then, should judgement tests be designed?

We have made it clear all along that Leech's judgement tests depart from performance equivalence by virtue of two factors, the artificiality of the test situation and the strict test instructions, of which the second is the chief factor. The lesson here is that in designing judgement tests care should be taken to minimize the artificiality of the test situation and, especially, not to make the test instructions unduly strict. In fact, we may see the lesson in a more general way. There is a sense in which, as far as bilateral implication and synonymy are concerned, the tacit standards operating in the passing of judgements are more strict than the tacit standards operating in spontaneous performance. In designing judgement tests aimed at reflecting performance equivalence, therefore, measures should be taken to cancel out this difference. One measure is to minimize the artificiality of the test situation. Another measure is to make the test instructions less strict than it may appear at first sight that they should be, the exact extent being determinable by comparison with results of approved performance tests.

In practice, it seems sufficient to adopt the second measure. This measure can take one or both of two forms. We may, in the first place, stress explicitly to our informants that what is being tested is synonymy as a phenomenon in everyday communication, as in the following test instruction: Imagine yourself in the context of everyday communication; do the two sentences mean the same? In the second place, we may attach qualifications to the idea of sameness of meaning, as in either (1) Do the two sentences mean essentially the same? or (2) Do the two sentences mean more or less the same? It may appear that by introducing qualifications like 'essentially' or 'more or less' we are testing what may be called near-synonymy. This may be true if synonymy is conceived as a matter of strict judgement and reflection. As far as synonymy as a phenomenon in everyday communication is concerned, however, what is being tested is not near-synonymy but synonymy. And, in the light of the last paragraph, it is only natural that, in principle, synonymy as a phenomenon in everyday communication can be tested via near-synonymy as a matter of strict judgement and reflection. It is almost as if people will use two sentences as meaning the same in everyday communication provided they have judged the two sentences to

mean essentially or more or less the same upon strict reflection.

To conclude the first part of this section, let me stress that performance equivalence is our end and that this end may be achieved both by means of performance tests and by means of judgement tests.

We have discussed in some detail all three sets of alternatives, and it is time to bring the three strands of our discussion together.

It will be remembered that the three sets of alternatives are (1) truth/falsehood versus assertion/denial, (2) analytic versus pragmatic equivalence, and (3) judgement versus performance equivalence, and that we have decided in favour of the second alternative in each set. The first set of alternatives, it will have become clear, is essentially a matter of method (although it is linked to the third set of alternatives), as is the difference between judgement and performance tests. The other two sets of alternatives, however, involve more fundamental differences, in that they represent different ways in which synonymy is conceived.

In the light of this twofold conceptual difference between Leech and Lyons, we may formulate Leech's conception of synonymy more explicitly as follows:

If x is a synonym of y and X and Y are two assertions identical except that X contains x where Y contains y, then X analytically and strictly implies Y and vice versa.

'Analytically' represents Leech's stand on the analytic/pragmatic equivalence distinction while 'strictly' represents his stand on the judgement/performance equivalence distinction. Such a conception of synonymy, as I have tried to show, is divorced from the standards of sameness of meaning that operate in everyday communication. It must be rejected, therefore, in favour of Lyons's conception, which is free from this drawback.

Using the same framework, we may formulate Lyons's definition of synonymy more explicitly as follows:

If x is a synonym of y and X and Y are two sentences or longer stretches of discourse identical except that X contains x where Y contains y, then X pragmatically and normally implies Y and vice versa.

'Pragmatically' represents Lyons's stand on the analytic/pragmatic equivalence distinction while 'normally' represents his stand on the judgement/performance equivalence distinction. Such a conception of synonymy, as I have tried to show, reflects the standards

of sameness of meaning that operate in everyday communication, and is the one to which we subscribe in principle.

As far as methods are concerned, we have seen, in the first place, that assertion and denial are preferable to the concepts of truth and falsehood from an operational point of view. It should be pointed out that the usefulness of assertion and denial is not confined to performance tests, although there is a natural connection between the two. In the second place, we have seen that performance tests using assertion and denial can serve as a satisfactory method of testing performance equivalence, but that it is also possible to design satisfactory judgement tests for the same purpose. Both methods can also be used for testing pragmatic equivalence; in fact, pragmatic equivalence poses little difficulty as far as testing is concerned, since it is fairly easy to focus informants' attention on the sentence and context in question.

Our sameness of meaning criterion, then, is made up of two parts. The first part is a conception of sameness of meaning in terms of pragmatic and performance equivalence. It is backed up by the second part, which consists of testing methods, in regard to which we may adopt Lyons's performance tests using assertion and denial or adopt any other performance or judgement tests, provided they are operationally and materially adequate.

While enough has been said about testing methods for our purpose, more needs to be said in defence and clarification of pragmatic equivalence on the one hand and performance equivalence on the other. In the next two sections I will further defend and clarify pragmatic and performance equivalence respectively.

7.7. In defence of pragmatic equivalence: meaning versus reference

It is a commonplace of discussions of synonymy that synonymy is a matter of sameness of meaning and not mere identity of reference. We do not depart from this well-established view. In subscribing to pragmatic equivalence, however, we may appear open to the charge that this is exactly what we are doing.

This charge is only to be expected, given the nature of pragmatic equivalence. The thesis of pragmatic equivalence is that

bilateral implication and, by the same token, synonymy must be bound to context. Behind this particular thesis is the general theory of meaning according to which "all sense-relations are in principle context-dependent" (Lyons, 1968: 452). But then so is reference, with the consequence that both sameness of meaning and identity of reference are context-bound, and the further consequence that, unless measures are taken, the one will be confused with the other. Herein lies a potential trap in the handling of synonymy which one must find a way of avoiding if one treats synonymy as context-bound and at the same time as a matter of sameness of meaning rather than mere identity of reference. It is the aim of this section to fulfil just this obligation. But first we will take a closer look at the problem by considering the way in which Harris (1973) has objected to Lyons's concept of pragmatic equivalence.

Harris subjects Lyons's concept of pragmatic equivalence to a number of criticisms, the most notable being that Lyons has fallen into the trap which we identified above. To be more precise, instead of objecting to pragmatic equivalence on the specific ground of its (alleged) failure to distinguish meaning from reference, Harris does so on the more general ground of its (alleged) "failure to distinguish semantic from extralinguistic knowledge" (1973: 129). And:

The argument in support of this criticism is simply that if the interpretation of an expression depends on certain features of the communication situation, as distinct from the expression used, then to that extent the interpretation is not a matter of semantic knowledge. Thus, to take Lyons's example, supposing the linguist's investigation is confined to the semantics of 'shopping English' or, more strictly still, to the semantics of 'tobacconist's English', even then the method proposed offers no sound basis for reaching the conclusion that e.g. range and selection are (or are not) synonymous. For it incorporates no way of distinguishing between the respects in which the speaker's commitment is based on knowledge of certain facts about the situation, and the respects in which the speaker's commitment is based on knowledge of the meanings of the words used. To know that X is a tobacconist, or a journalist, or a bank manager, or to know that a conversation is taking place in a tobacconist's shop or a newspaper office, or a bank, is to know - so the argument would run - something about the world in which one lives, not something about the language one speaks. If the purpose of semantic description is to account for communication by postulating semantic knowledge shared by language-users, it requires a method of investigation which distinguishes evidence of

semantic knowledge from evidence of extralinguistic knowledge (Harris, 1973: 129).

Among the examples cited by Harris to illustrate this failure are 'Everest'/'the highest mountain in the world' and 'flower'/'rose', which, according to Harris, will be treated, given appropriate informant response, by Lyons's criterion of pragmatic equivalence as context-bound synonyms in 'Everest is the highest mountain in the world and Hilary climbed ____' (1973: 136) and 'John grows ____s, and roses are the only flowers John grows' (1973: 133-4) respectively.

It is important to note that in both these examples two terms are rendered synonymous - let us assume for the sake of argument that they are synonymous by virtue of having passed Lyons's synonymy tests - by factual knowledge of a trivial kind: trivial in the sense that we are literally told that A is B (i.e. 'Everest is the highest mountain in the world' and 'Roses are the only flowers John grows'). And because we are told that A is B, the (assumed) synonymy between A and B does not depend on the exercise of our semantic judgement. In other words, A and B need not have meaning over and above reference; or if they do, their meanings will be irrelevant (apart from their possible effect on the appropriateness of A and B as referring expressions in this context).

We may use 'Everest' and 'the highest mountain in the world' to identify a second type of case, by considering them in the frame 'Hilary climbed ____'. Here informants are not told that Everest is the highest mountain in the world, but they may well know that this is so. And if they do know, their response to synonymy tests on 'Everest' and 'the highest mountain in the world' will be the same as if they are explicitly told. If so, 'Everest' and 'the highest mountain in the world' will have been rendered synonymous - let us assume that they will pass Lyons's synonymy tests - by a piece of general knowledge already in the informants' possession. Another example would be 'Paris' and 'the capital of France', which we earlier saw used by Leech in 'Charlotte lives in ____' as an example of factual equivalence. In this type of case, one of the two terms need not have meaning over and above reference; or if it does, its meaning will be irrelevant (apart from its possible effect on the appropriateness of the term as a referring expression in this context).

Though the factual knowledge involved is of a trivial kind in the one and of a general kind in the other, both of these types of case involve expressions which are rendered synonymous (under our present assumptions) by such factual knowledge as presents us with a straightforward equation.

There is, however, a third type of case, which is not mentioned by Harris. This third type is exemplified by 'dog'/'bitch' and 'get'/'buy', which, as we saw in 7.5, are treated by Lyons as synonymous in 'My _____ has just had pups' and 'I'll go to the shop and _____ some bread' respectively. What differentiates this type from the other two is, in the first place, that although factual knowledge plays some part in giving rise to context-bound synonymy it does not present us with a straightforward equation. In the case of 'dog'/'bitch', context-bound synonymy results from the knowledge that only female dogs are capable of giving birth to pups; in fact, it is debatable whether the knowledge involved is factual or semantic, or perhaps both. In the case of 'get'/'buy', context-bound synonymy results from the factual knowledge that "unless there is some evidence to suggest the contrary, it will be assumed that what is obtained from a shop is obtained by purchase" (Lyons, 1968: 453). Not only are we not presented with a straightforward equation, we must also note that, because of the absence of a straightforward equation, the synonymy between A and B in this type of case is also attributable to the meaning of A and B. Thus in the case of 'dog'/'bitch', the synonymy between A and B is partly attributable to the semantic knowledge that 'bitch' is the marked term denoting female dogs while 'dog' is the unmarked term denoting dogs of both sexes. In the case of 'get'/'buy', the synonymy between A and B is partly attributable to the semantic knowledge that 'buy' is a hyponym of 'get' or, to put it another way, buying is a way (or kind) of getting. If we now take factual and semantic knowledge into account simultaneously, the rationale whereby A and B are rendered synonymous may be put as follows: as a matter of semantic knowledge, A differs from B by being less specific; this semantic difference is neutralized by factual knowledge, which adds to A what specific element of meaning B has over and above the meaning of A. What we have here, in other words, is context-bound synonymy which is the product of the interaction between semantic knowledge and factual knowledge. As we shall see in

Chapter 10, the interaction can be quite subtle.

Having identified these three types of case, let us, for the sake of argument, add, to the assumption that it is possible for all three types of case to pass Lyons's synonymy tests, the further assumption that it is wrong to treat any of these types of case as involving synonymy. Given the conjunction of these two assumptions, the question naturally arises as to whether Lyons's synonymy tests, and hence his concept of pragmatic equivalence, do not fall foul of the generally accepted view that synonymy is a matter of sameness of meaning.

The answer is 'no'. To justify this answer, I will invoke the distinction between semantic tests conceived as hypothesis-testing procedures and semantic tests conceived as 'discovery procedures'. Leech sums up the distinction as follows:

(a) Hypothesis testing. As it is usually understood (and not to insist on refinements), the process of scientific investigation involves setting up, within the context of a general theory, a hypothesis (how the hypothesis is arrived at is immaterial) to be tested against observations. If the observations are as predicted, the hypothesis is confirmed; otherwise, it is proved wrong, and an alternative hypothesis must be sought.

(b) Discovery procedures. A discovery procedure, strictly, is a procedure for deriving a linguistic analysis direct from data. Following Chomsky's remarks, it is generally accepted that to frame the empirical basis of linguistics in terms of discovery procedures is to aim at too high a goal. Within such an approach, it would be impossible to justify theoretical notions such as 'competence' and logical 'implication'; moreover, any factor affecting informants' judgements, however eccentric, would have to play a part in the semantic description (1970: 350).

Given this distinction, it is clear that Lyons's synonymy tests are open to objection only if they are conceived as discovery procedures. Once we conceive tests as hypothesis-testing procedures, it is up to us to choose what hypotheses to form and put to the test. It follows that we will be able to steer clear of the three types of case simply by not forming hypotheses about them. This applies not only to the three types of case that we have identified but also to any type of case whatsoever which it is considered wrong to treat as involving synonymy but which the tests employed cannot eliminate.

The conception of synonymy tests as hypothesis-testing procedures, then, offers protection, as it were, for the concept of pragmatic

equivalence. Such protection, however, is only partial: all it amounts to is making sure that the concept of pragmatic equivalence will not be open to objection simply because, in the absence of constraints on permissible hypotheses, the tests which back it up can yield wrong results. Once partially protected in this way, it is then up to anyone who propounds the concept of pragmatic equivalence to further defend it by delimiting the range of permissible hypotheses. What, then, do we see as the range of permissible hypotheses when we say that we subscribe to pragmatic equivalence?

To provide an answer, I will first give up the second assumption that we made earlier, i.e. that it is wrong to treat any of the three types of case as involving synonymy. With this assumption out of the way, I will now draw the line between the first two types (e.g. 'flower'/'rose' in 'John grows _____s, and roses are the only flowers John grows' and 'Everest'/'the highest mountain in the world' in 'Hilary climbed _____' respectively) and the third type (e.g. 'get'/'buy' in 'I'll go to the shop and _____ some bread'), treating the latter as the lower bound of synonymy and thus the lower bound of permissible synonymy hypotheses. To put it more explicitly in the terms used earlier, the line is between such sameness as results from a straightforward, non-semantic equation and such sameness as results from the interaction of semantic and factual knowledge.

In drawing the line where it is, we conform to the view, mentioned at the beginning of this section, that synonymy is a matter of sameness of meaning and not mere identity of reference or, more generally, mere factual identity. We have thus answered the charge that we are treating identity of reference or factual identity in general as a sufficient condition of synonymy. It is true that we allow for the possibility that factual knowledge may help produce synonymy (i.e. sameness of meaning) between terms which semantic knowledge alone would not make us treat as synonymous; but we take factual knowledge into account, not in its own right, but only insofar as it influences the behaviour of meaning. To those who object to this position, I can only say that it is not incompatible with the condition of material adequacy to treat the third type of case as involving synonymy (cf. Naess, 1957: 91) and that I find this type of case worth investigating under the rubric

of synonymy as a phenomenon in everyday communication.

7.8. In defence of performance equivalence: degrees of sameness

Judgement equivalence, we have seen, requires a higher degree of sameness of meaning than performance equivalence. As far as this set of alternatives is concerned, we may indeed treat Leech's conception of synonymy as one of 'strict synonymy', in contrast with Lyons's conception, which may be treated as one of 'normal synonymy'. We have thus explicitly introduced the notion of degrees of sameness, a notion worth pursuing both by way of further defending performance equivalence and by way of doing fuller justice to judgement equivalence.

To talk of two degrees of sameness - 'strict' and 'normal' - is of course an oversimplification. The issue is in fact far more complex, since many degrees of sameness (i.e. sameness up to a certain point) are distinguishable, all within what has quite commonly been regarded as the domain of synonymy by psychologists (cf. Hermann, et al, 1978), synonymists (cf. Webster) and linguists (cf. Weinreich, 1962). By 'distinguishable' I do not mean that the degrees of sameness in question are amenable to strict quantification by means of such techniques as componential analysis (cf. Weinreich, 1962; Nunnally & Hodges, 1965). That such methods have not proved successful in quantifying semantic relatedness in general and degrees of sameness of meaning in particular is well recognized (cf. Harris, 1973: 3-4; Lyons, 1968: 447; Lyons, 1977: 552-3). However, their lack of success does not alter the undoubted correctness of the intuition that sameness of meaning is a matter of degree.

We may refer in this connection to a method for measuring sameness of meaning that has been used by psychologists. Herrmann et al, for example, as a preliminary in an experiment on synonymy response latency, obtained a similarity rating for two 'synonym sets' in the following way:

Method: Hierarchical Clustering Analysis

Subjects. A group of 25 people, consisting of students, businessmen, housewives, and professors, filled out a synonym-evaluation questionnaire without pay.

Materials and Procedure. A booklet was constructed of an instruction page and two sections of 11 pages each. One section presented stimuli from a synonym set referred to here as appetitive emotions (i.e. covet, desire, dream, hope, long (for), lust, need, strive, want, wish, and yearn) and one for a synonym set of mental ability terms (i.e. bright, clever, cunning, intelligent, quick, sharp, sly, smart, tricky, witty, and wise). Each stimulus page was headed by one of 11 different stimulus words, below which was a column of the remaining 10 words (in random order) with a line alongside of each word. Half of the booklets presented the appetitive emotions first, and half presented the mental ability terms first. The directions asked the subject to judge the similarity between each of the 10 stimulus words on each page and the stimulus word at the top of the page on a 7-point scale, with 7 representing identical meanings and 1 representing very dissimilar meanings. The subject recorded his/her judgments on the line alongside each comparison word. The questionnaire was completed at home by the subject. The means of similarity ratings were analyzed by the hierarchical clustering program of OSIRIS (1978: 151).

The results of the analysis are shown in Figure 1 (1978: 151).

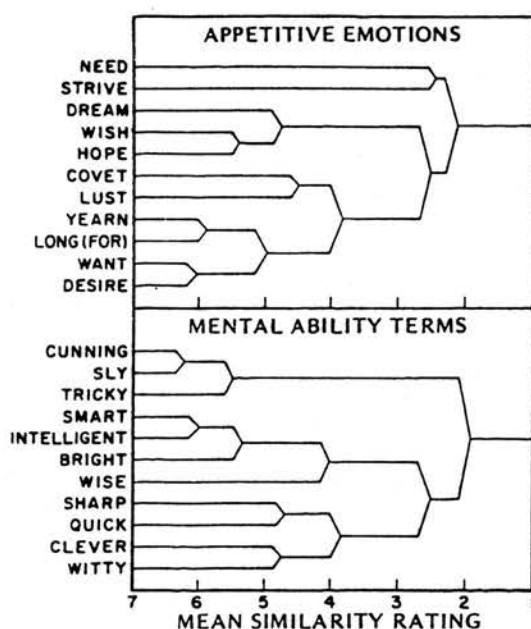


Figure 1. A hierarchical clustering solution for two synonym sets as a function of mean similarity rating (where ratings of one and seven represent low and high similarity, respectively).

What is of interest to us is not so much the hierarchical analysis itself as the intuitive rating from which the former was derived. One may not entirely agree that "inspection of either solution reveals that the hierarchical clustering analyses arranged the terms in an intuitively satisfactory manner" (Herrmann et al, 1978: 151), just as one may disagree with other aspects of the

method. But what for us is the main point should not be in doubt, namely, that it is consistent with native speakers' intuitions to postulate degrees of sameness of meaning.

Although what we have just seen is the rating of synonymy in abstraction from context, it seems reasonable to suggest that the perception of degree also applies to judgements of synonymy in context (i.e. pragmatic equivalence). In fact, this is the position held by Bloose when, having defined synonymy in terms of mutual entailment (as we saw earlier), he says that "two expressions are synonymous to the extent that this mutual entailment holds; degrees of synonymy are thus admitted" (1965: 310).

Given that sameness of meaning is a gradable notion, no degree of sameness is inherently more correct than any other. Instead, whether a degree of sameness is the right one in a particular case depends on whether it conforms to the point of view from which synonymy is being studied. As far as degrees of sameness are concerned, therefore, the task of formulating a definition of synonymy consists in trying to identify the degree of sameness judged to be sufficient from the point of view being adopted. By the same token, an objection to treating a particular degree of sameness as synonymy is well-directed only if the degree in question is at variance with the guiding point of view. One may, of course, object to the guiding point of view in the first place, but that is a different matter.

The point of view that has guided us in our search for a characterization of synonymy is that of everyday communication. It is because performance equivalence reflects a degree of sameness which conforms to this point of view that we subscribe to it. And from the point of view of everyday communication the degree of sameness in question is not near-synonymy, but synonymy. For near-synonymy is any degree of sameness which falls short of the criteria of synonymy in question but which one nevertheless wants to treat as a secondary phenomenon under the same rubric.

In treatments of synonymy the temptation is often, as in Leech's case, to insist on the highest degree of sameness (of cognitive meaning). We have no objection to the highest degree of sameness as such, but only if the aim is to explicate synonymy as it normally manifests itself in everyday communication, in which case there will

be incompatibility between the degree of sameness chosen and the point of view adopted. It is precisely on account of such incompatibility that we have found judgement equivalence unsuitable for our purpose.

When we say that judgement equivalence requires a higher degree of sameness of meaning than performance equivalence, what we mean, more precisely, is that there can be such a degree of cognitive difference between two terms as to falsify a hypothesis of synonymy between them in terms of judgement equivalence but not one in terms of performance equivalence. So far we have taken the line that any such semantic difference is irrelevant or immaterial in everyday communication. In so doing, however, we have looked at only half the picture. For a fuller and more accurate view of the matter, we must now draw attention to the other half.

What this other half of the picture reveals to us is that the kind of cognitive difference we are talking about is relevant in everyday communication: relevant, however, in a sense that is compatible with the sense in which we have so far treated it as irrelevant. As we have seen, the kind of cognitive difference in question is irrelevant in the sense that two otherwise identical sentences would be 'repetitions' of each other. That is to say, the cognitive difference, which we may grant to be real enough in careful judgement and reflection, is cognitively irrelevant in everyday communication. However - and this is the half of the picture now under focus - the kind of cognitive difference may be relevant in the sense, say, that it makes us prefer one term to the other for being more appropriate or more accurate, and so forth. The sense in question, to be more explicit, is stylistic. Warburg's conception of style is akin to the one that I have in mind, if in the following quotation we understand "roughly, but only roughly, the same" as implying the criterion of judgement equivalence:

Good style, it seems to me, consists in choosing the appropriate symbolization of the experience you wish to convey, from among a number of words whose meaning-area is roughly, but only roughly, the same (1964: 39; cf. also Hockett, 1958: 556).

The full picture, then, represents a situation in which the kind of cognitive difference we are talking about is neutralized by a 'rule' of everyday communication such that it is no longer

cognitively, but only stylistically, relevant. It is this possibility of neutralization that makes synonymy the widespread phenomenon in everyday communication that it is.

7.9. From occurrence-synonymy to sense-synonymy and lexeme-synonymy: 'recalcitrant' sentences

Having established both an interchangeability criterion and a sameness of meaning criterion, we now have at our disposal a full characterization of occurrence-synonymy, which we may condense into the following definition:

- (1) Occurrence-synonymy: A^o and B^o are synonymous in a sentential frame and context (a) if and only if both A^o and B^o are grammatically and collocationally acceptable in the sentential frame and (b) if and only if the two resulting sentences pragmatically (i.e. in the context in question) and normally imply each other.

Now that we have characterized occurrence-synonymy, we have, by implication, also characterized sense-synonymy and lexeme-synonymy. It will be remembered that we provided partial definitions of sense-synonymy and lexeme-synonymy in 3.1, namely:

- (2) Sense-synonymy: A^s and B^s are synonymous if and only if for each and every occurrence assignable to A^s there is assignable to B^s an occurrence which is synonymous with it and vice versa.

- (3) Lexeme-synonymy: A^l and B^l are synonymous if and only if for each and every occurrence (or sense) assignable to A^l there is assignable to B^l an occurrence (or sense) which is synonymous with it and vice versa.

These two definitions are partial because the underlined portions of them are left uninterpreted. We can now make these partial definitions complete by simply stipulating that the underlined portions of (2) and (3) are to be interpreted in accordance with (1).

There is, however, a problem with our definitions of sense-synonymy and lexeme-synonymy as they stand, and it is similar to a familiar problem that confronts any characterization of synonymy in terms of interchangeability salva veritate (cf. Harris, 1973: 117-9; Fodor, 1977: 44-6).

Cooper describes the problem confronting interchangeability salva veritate as follows:

The theory of synonymy I want to discuss and amend is often called the 'interchangeability theory'. Put loosely,

the claim is that synonymy is a function of words being interchangeable in sentences without altering the truth-values of those sentences. The extreme version of the theory is well stated by Benson Mates as follows:

Two expressions are synonymous in a language L if and only if they may be interchanged in each sentence of L without altering the truth value of that sentence.

So, for example, 'bachelor' and 'unmarried man' are synonymous if any true sentence containing 'bachelor' remains true when 'unmarried man' replaces 'bachelor' - similarly for false sentences.

There seems to be an immediate problem for this extreme version - for there are sentences in which it would be quite hopeless to expect any two words to be generally interchangeable salva veritate (i.e. without altering truth-values). If so, then by the extreme theory, it is quite hopeless to suppose that there are any synonyms. Let us call any sentence in which it would be hopeless to expect interchangeability a 'recalcitrant' sentence. I shall now mention some types of recalcitrant sentences (1973a: 167).

Of these types one type is exemplified by '"Bachelor" has eight letters', and another type consists of the so-called 'intensional' sentences. Common to all recalcitrant sentences, as Cooper discovers, is the fact that the failure of one expression to be interchangeable with another expression salva veritate in them is due to factors that have nothing to do with meaning. And since synonymy is a matter of meaning, it is only reasonable to disqualify recalcitrant sentences from serving as evidence against (sense-) synonymy hypotheses. This consideration leads Cooper to formulate the following, more 'mellow', definition of synonymy:

Two expressions are synonymous if and only if they are interchangeable salva veritate in all those sentences attempted confirmation of which presupposes giving a semantic interpretation of the expressions (1973a: 170).

Although Cooper has postulated recalcitrant sentences in relation to interchangeability salva veritate, the essence of what he has to say applies equally to our definitions of sense-synonymy and lexeme-synonymy. Just as, say, 'unmarried man' cannot replace 'bachelor' in '"Bachelor" has eight letters' without changing the truth value of the sentence, so '"Bachelor" has eight letters' will not pragmatically and normally imply '"Unmarried man" has eight letters'. And just as sentences like this should not be treated as evidence against (sense- or lexeme-) synonymy hypotheses in the one case, so

they should not be so treated in the other case, either.

Cooper characterizes recalcitrant sentences as follows:

A sentence is recalcitrant, relative to an expression 'A' appearing in it, if attempted confirmation of the sentence does not presuppose a semantic interpretation of 'A' (1973b: 268).

Since our treatment of synonymy is not in terms of interchangeability salva veritate, we may adapt Cooper's characterization so that it reads:

A sentence is recalcitrant, relative to an expression 'A' appearing in it, if 'A' resists substitution by another expression for reasons which have nothing to do with the meaning of either expression.

I believe this adapted characterization will be sufficient for our purpose.

In the light of the notion of recalcitrant sentences, we must reformulate our definitions of sense-synonymy and lexeme-synonymy, so that they now stand as follows:

(2') Sense-synonymy: A^S and B^S are synonymous if and only if for each and every occurrence in non-recalcitrant sentences assignable to A^S there is assignable to B^S an occurrence which is synonymous with it and vice versa.

(3') Lexeme-synonymy: A^L and B^L are synonymous if and only if for each and every occurrence (or sense) in non-recalcitrant sentences assignable to A^L there is assignable to B^L an occurrence (or sense) which is synonymous with it and vice versa.

CHAPTER 8

FROM DEFINITION TO DESCRIPTION

This brief chapter is designed as a transition between Part One of the thesis, which has been concerned with the definition and explication of synonymy, and Part Two, which will be devoted to problems in the description of synonymy. It will therefore be partly retrospective and recapitulatory, and partly prospective and preparatory in nature. I will begin by recapitulating parts of Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. From the conclusions that will emerge from this brief summary, I will next derive three types of synonyms, which will in turn give rise to three tasks of description. These descriptive tasks will then be carried one by one in the three chapters that follow.

In Chapter 3 we were concerned with the relationship between lexical units and the definition of synonymy. To recapitulate, we may start by noting that the relation which holds between occurrences and senses (we may conveniently leave lexemes out of account for the purpose of this chapter) may be seen as one of assignment, whereby an occurrence realizes a sense and is assignable to it. Given this assignment relation, it is possible to define occurrence-synonymy independently and then to define sense-synonymy derivatively through the assignment relation. Thus for A and B to be occurrence-synonymous it is both necessary and sufficient that they meet the requisite criteria in one sentence and context. From this can easily be derived a definition of sense-synonymy in the following terms: For A and B - each now construed as a sense - to be sense-synonymous it is both necessary and sufficient that for each and every occurrence assignable to A there is assignable to B an occurrence which is synonymous with it, and vice versa. It follows that a single instance where occurrence-synonymy does not hold between an occurrence assignable to A and an occurrence assignable to B constitutes sufficient evidence that A and B are not sense-synonymous. From this it is clear that sense-synonymy entails occurrence-synonymy, but not conversely. Herein lies a measure of the 'strength' of the two definitions, with sense-synonymy imposing conditions harder to meet than is the case with occurrence-synonymy.

The question then arises as to whether occurrence-synonymy as such can be properly regarded as synonymy. Here considerations of both operational and material adequacy point to an affirmative answer. At the end of this line of reasoning, we came to the conclusion, which is important in the present connection, that the definition of synonymy should be such as to accommodate occurrence-synonymy. Such a definition need not exclude sense-synonymy, unless one is a strict contextualist. On the contrary, once criteria of occurrence-synonymy have been established, it is perfectly straightforward, as we have seen, to derive from them criteria of sense-synonymy, provided certain measures concerning sense-identity and recalcitrant sentences are taken.

Our attention in Chapter 4 was on the relationship between lexical units and the description of synonymy. The basic argument presented there was as follows. When adequate criteria of occurrence-synonymy are applied to language data, they will yield, under appropriate circumstances, descriptive statements of occurrence-synonymy, that is, statements to the effect that A and B are synonymous in a particular sentence/context or particular sentences/contexts. Though such statements are correct, they need not always constitute the best description. For the best description is one which achieves the highest possible degree of economy compatible with descriptive adequacy. This naturally leads to the conclusion, which is again important in the present connection, that when, as is often the case, descriptive adequacy can be satisfied on the level of sense, statements of senses-synonymy - conceived as the merging of statements of occurrence-synonymy - are to be preferred for being more economical. At the same time, statements of occurrence-synonymy will still have a useful function to fulfil, for there are many instances of synonymy between occurrences whose corresponding senses are not sense-synonymous.

If we now place our respective conclusions from Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 side by side, it will be obvious that we regard both sense and occurrence as legitimate levels of meaning and, more particularly, both sense-synonymy and occurrence-synonymy as legitimate levels of synonymy.

It will be recalled that both the conception of synonymy as a meaning-relation between senses and the conception of synonymy as

a meaning-relation between occurrences have tended to be held by people who regard their own conception as incompatible with the other. This is attributable to two opposing views of lexical meaning: the autonomist view, which underlies sense-synonymy, and the contextualist view, which underlies occurrence-synonymy. Given this conflict, the question may appear to arise as to which of the two conceptions of synonymy is the right one. For our part, however, we do not subscribe exclusively to either conception, for we believe that the two conceptions need not be mutually exclusive and that both the level of sense and the level of occurrence have an essential role to play in a systematic treatment of synonymy.

But in holding this belief we face objections from both the autonomists and the (strict) contextualists. We have already partially responded to such objections, and we will try to counter them more systematically and thoroughly in 10.4. For the present, however, it is far more important to underline the consequence arising out of the conjunction of the two conclusions mentioned above.

To put this consequence into perspective, it is helpful to bring in the autonomist and the contextualist position for comparison. Thus, for those who regard sense as the sole legitimate level of meaning and consequently sense-synonymy as the sole legitimate level of synonymy, it does not make sense to talk in terms of occurrence-synonymy. Conversely, for those who regard occurrence as the sole legitimate level of meaning and consequently occurrence-synonymy as the sole legitimate level of synonymy, it makes sense to talk only in terms of occurrence-synonymy. Only when both sense and occurrence are regarded as legitimate levels of meaning and both sense-synonymy and occurrence-synonymy as legitimate levels of synonymy, as is with our position, does it make sense to talk in terms of occurrence-synonyms whose corresponding senses fall short of sense-synonymy.

What it is legitimate to talk about, to put it another way, are senses which are synonymous in some sentences/contexts but not synonymous in others. Adopting, but also adapting, the terms 'communis' and 'propria' as used by Bloch (1953: 60) in relation to types of relative distribution, we may refer to those sentences/contexts in which two senses are synonymous as their communis, and

those sentences/contexts in which two senses are not synonymous as their propria. Once we recognize both a communis and a propria, it is natural to ask why two senses can be synonymous in some sentences/contexts but not synonymous in others.

Where communis and propria co-exist, however, they are usually not in equal need of explanation. Thus, when we find occurrence-synonyms whose corresponding senses fall short of sense-synonymy, two types are distinguishable, though not always sharply. The first type consists of cases where, though the two senses involved are not synonymous in all sentences/contexts, when they are synonymous their synonymy is not due to accidental factors in the sentences/contexts in question and is therefore not unexpected. One example is provided by 'generous' and 'handsome', where, when carrying the sense-meaning of "generous", 'handsome' cannot be predicated of human beings. Another example consists of 'considerable' and 'tidy', where, when carrying the sense-meaning of "considerable", 'tidy' is more or less restricted to collocation with amounts of money. We will examine these and other cases in Chapter 9. Where occurrence-synonyms of this type are concerned, it is obviously more natural, and often sufficient, to try and account for the propria, the propria being what is somewhat unexpected and thus in need of explanation. The second type differs from the first in that it comprises cases where two senses normally not synonymous happen to be synonymous in one or more sentences/contexts by virtue of accidental factors in the sentences/contexts in question. This type is exemplified by 'dog'/'bitch' and 'get'/'buy', which we discussed in Chapter 7. Further examples are 'hard' and 'cold' when modifying or being predicated of 'winter', and 'improve' and 'increase' when 'understanding' serves as their subject or object. I will discuss the latter two pairs and other cases in Chapter 10. In such cases, in contrast to occurrence-synonymys of the first type, it is obviously more natural, and often sufficient, to try and account for the communis, for here it is the communis rather than the propria that is somewhat unexpected and thus calls for explanation.

It should be stressed that the distinction we have just drawn between the two types of occurrence-synonyms is entirely motivated by considerations of explanatory naturalness. It is important to

stress this point because, it will be remembered, we also distinguished two types of occurrence-synonyms in Chapter 4, with regard to the making of synonymy statements. These two distinctions are different, as the latter is entirely motivated by the search for descriptive economy. In practice, they overlap considerably but they do not coincide. Where they do overlap, it will also be more economical to try and account for the *propria* and *communis* (respectively) in the two types of cases identified above.

In the light of what has just been said, three types of synonyms may now be identified, namely: sense-synonyms (as well as lexeme-synonyms insofar as they exist), occurrence-synonyms of the first type, and occurrence-synonyms of the second type.

From this rough classification there can be seen to emerge three tasks in a comprehensive description of synonymy (cf. Lyons, 1981: 50-1 for 'partial synonyms' in the sense of not being 'totally synonymous' or not being 'completely synonymous'; cf. Ullmann, 1957: 109-10 for 'rational synonymy'). First, to account for the *propria* of otherwise synonymous senses. Second, to account for the *communis* between otherwise non-synonymous senses. And thirdly, to describe the various dimensions of communicative relevance on which synonyms can differ, whichever of the three types they belong to.

I have brought together these three phenomena (corresponding to the three tasks) for description not only because they are a natural consequence of our decision to treat both sense and occurrence as legitimate levels of meaning and both sense-synonymy and occurrence-synonymy as legitimate levels of synonymy, but also because I think that, taken together, they go a long way towards accounting for the way in which native speakers of English make use of one delimitable, though internally heterogeneous, domain of its lexical resources, i.e. synonyms. A description of these phenomena would thus be a description of native speakers' competence in the domain of synonymy.

These three tasks will occupy us for the remainder of the present study.

Part Two

Description

CHAPTER 9

ACCOUNTING FOR THE PROPRIA OF OTHERWISE SYNONYMOUS SENSES

9.1. The delimitation of propria

We saw in the last chapter that occurrence-synonyms whose corresponding senses fall short of sense-synonymy can be divided into two types. Our concern in the present chapter is with the first type, which, it will be remembered, comprises cases where the communis between two senses is expected while the propria stands out in need of explanation. To put it briefly, the question which we will try to answer in this chapter is why, given that two senses are synonymous in some sentences/contexts (communis), the same two senses fail to be synonymous in other sentences/contexts (propria).

Between two senses four types of relative distribution concerning synonymy are possible, namely, complementary, coincident, incorporating and overlapping (cf. Bloch, 1953: 60). It is obvious that the first two do not come within our present purview. In the case of complementary distribution there is simply no communis, which means there is no synonymy. As regards coincident distribution, since what we have here is full sense-synonymy, there is no propria to explain. Our concern, then, is with incorporating and overlapping distribution alone. The former presents us with one set of propria to account for while the latter presents us with two.

Since we conceive propria as a matter of two senses not being synonymous (in some sentences/contexts-), we must automatically exclude types of case where what appears to be propria is in fact attributable to factors which take us beyond the two senses in question. It is my concern in the remainder of this section to draw attention to such types of case by way of delimiting what for our present purpose may be referred to as genuine propria.

Now when two words fail to be synonymous in a sentence/context, this may be either because they are not interchangeable in that sentence/context or because, though interchangeable in that sentence/context, they do not carry the same meaning therein. As we are concerned with the propria pertaining to the same two senses, the

second explanation is automatically inapplicable. For if the substitution of one word for the other results in a change in the meaning of one sentence when the same substitution preserves the meaning of another sentence, it is clearly right to infer that there is one sense which is not shared by the two words and that this is why they are not synonymous in the first sentence. In other words, the recognition of polysemy (for one of the two words) offers a sufficient explanation of the facts in question.

Take, for example, 'also' and 'too', which have been treated in detail by Lee. According to Lee,

Too is always replaceable by also in the same position of occurrence and without material change of meaning, but ... in some instances also is not replaceable in this way by too (1965: 256).

Thus,

In many of the instances ... replacement of also by too in the same position would materially affect meaning. It is often necessary to examine a considerable portion of context to discover whether or not replacement would have this effect. Examples:

But now he also had two private and opposite memories to deal with ... (S)

(The substitution of He too, i.e. he in addition to someone else, would change the meaning, as the wider context would make clear.)

... they also suspected that the ruling classes in these states might ... (L)

(From the wider context it is clear that the suspicion is a further one of theirs. They too suspected would, on the other hand, mean that they in addition to someone else suspected this.)

On August 29 Hitler also gave a nominal acceptance ... (L)

(Substitution of too here makes no difference of meaning: another government had already accepted the proposals, as the context makes clear.) (Lee, 1965: 257).

From this it is clear that where the substitution of 'too' for 'also' changes the meaning of the sentence this is due to the fact that 'also' has a sense not shared by 'too'. That this is the case is also testified by the fact that 'also' can cause ambiguity in a way that 'too' cannot. Some dictionaries, though not all, do in fact clearly distinguish these two senses of 'also' (cf. SOE, A New English-Chinese Dictionary (henceforth NECD)). Thus the failure of 'too' to replace 'also' in the sentences/contexts cited by Lee does not constitute what we would regard as genuine propria.

It is thus in the nature of genuine propria that it is caused by the failure of two words to be interchangeable or, in other words,

the unacceptability of one word in certain sentences/contexts where the other word is acceptable. Our task of accounting for the propria, then, may be seen to boil down to determining the nature of the unacceptability in question. It will be recalled that in Chapter 6 we identified four types of unacceptability - grammatical, semantic, purely collocational and situational - of which the first three constitute necessary conditions of interchangeability. It is in terms of these three types of unacceptability that we shall investigate the nature of propria.

But first it is necessary to clear the ground by mentioning some further types of propria which do not satisfy our criterion of 'genuine'. We have already seen that change of meaning (of the sentence), as opposed to unacceptability, is a sure indication that genuine propria is not involved. It hardly needs to be said that the converse, i.e. unacceptability is a sure indication of genuine propria, does not hold. In the first place, unacceptability due to homonymy clearly does not fall within the range of genuine propria.

Nor, in the second place, does unacceptability due to clear-cut polysemy constitute genuine propria. We shall count, for example, as instances of this type of unacceptability what Ullmann, Palmer and Seuren have drawn attention to with regard to 'broad'/'wide', 'deep'/'profound' and 'landscape'/'scenery' respectively:

Broad and wide are synonymous in some of their uses: the 'broadest sense' of a word is the same thing as its 'widest sense', etc. In other contexts, only one of the two terms can be used: we say ... a 'broad accent', not a wide one (Ullmann, 1962: 143).

Some words are interchangeable in certain environments only, e.g. that deep or profound may be used with sympathy but only deep with water (Palmer, 1976: 63).

Such perfect synonyms as tibia and shinbone are relatively rare. Much more common are 'incidental' synonyms, i.e. synonyms in certain environments, but not in others, such as landscape and scenery, which are commutable without change in meaning in many contexts, but not in, for instance:

(93) Archibald bought a landscape.

The problem of how to account for incidental synonyms has never been solved (Seuren, 1969: 223).

When it is as clear as in these cases that two different senses of one or both words are involved, the propria is only to be expected and calls for no other explanation than in terms of straightforward polysemy. And where distinct polysemy is involved, I do not think

what Seuren calls 'incidental' synonyms pose any serious problems. Nor, indeed, in my view, is it fitting to describe such synonyms as 'incidental'.

Problems do arise, however, when, as is often the case, polysemy is not as clear-cut as this. It is, for example, somewhat more difficult and less obviously convincing to invoke polysemy in explaining the propria of 'big'/'large' and 'strong'/'powerful' exemplified by Lyons and Halliday respectively as follows:

There are many contexts in which 'large' and 'big' are not interchangeable without violating the collocational restrictions of the one or the other. For example, 'large' cannot be substituted for 'big' in

'You are making a big mistake'.

And yet 'big' seems to have the same meaning here as it does in phrases such as 'a big house', for which we could, as we have seen, substitute 'a large house' (Lyons, 1981: 52).

The sentence he put forward a strong argument for it is acceptable in English; strong is a member of that set of items which can be juxtaposed with argument, a set which also includes powerful. Strong does not always stand in this same relation to powerful: he drives a strong car is, at least relatively, unacceptable, as is this tea's too powerful. To put it another way, a strong car and powerful tea will either be rejected as ungrammatical (or unlexical) or shown to be in some sort of marked contrast with a powerful car and strong tea; in either case the paradigmatic relation of strong to powerful is not a constant but depends on the syntagmatic relation in which each enters, here with argument, car or tea (Halliday, 1966: 150).

I take it as self-evident that an explanation of the propria between two words in terms of polysemy is more powerful than one which assigns the occurrences of each word to a single sense. If so, in cases like the above we should first seek a satisfactory explanation in terms of polysemy. Only failing such an explanation, should we then recognize genuine propria, which is to be accounted for in ways which will be discussed presently. In the two cases in question, it happens that a plausible explanation in terms of polysemy is available or partially available. Thus, in the first case, we can, following CED, identify three relevant senses for 'big': (1) "of great or considerable size ...", (2) "having great significance; important" and (3) "(intensifier usually qualifying something undesirable)" (these appear as 1, 2 and 4 under the entry for 'big', p.143). Given these three senses, it is clear that the occurrence of 'big' in 'a big house' is assignable to the

first sense while its occurrence in 'You are making a big mistake' is assignable, depending on context, to either the second or the third sense. We can now account for the propria by pointing out that of the three senses of 'big' only the first is shared by 'large'. In the case of 'powerful'/'strong', it is at least possible to explain the set of propria in favour of 'strong' by identifying a sense of 'strong' (i.e. "6. concentrated; not weak or diluted" (CED: 1441)) such that it is neither shared by 'powerful' nor is the sense to which the occurrence of 'strong' in 'He put forward a strong argument for it' is assignable.

In addition to unacceptability due to homonymy or polysemy, we will also treat as not constituting genuine propria such unacceptability as is attributable to the fact that one of the words in question lies astride two or more different word-classes one or more of which are not shared by the other word. However, as we shall see later, propria may be caused by grammatical unacceptability of a less obvious or categorical kind. To take just one example for the time being, 'bear', 'endure', 'stand' and 'abide' are synonymous in (9.1) and (9.2),

(9.1) He can't _____ that old man.

(9.2) He can't _____ seeing animals cruelly treated.

but, unlike the first two words, 'stand' and 'abide' are unacceptable in (9.3),

(9.3) He can't _____ to see animals cruelly treated.

because they are incapable of being followed by an infinitive construction. While it is normal lexicographic practice to treat different word-classes under different word entries or different senses, the fact that a word is capable of occurring in more than one construction, one or more of which do not admit of an otherwise synonymous word, is not in itself seen to warrant the establishment of more than one sense. The kind of propria we have just seen, though less obvious and categorical than that involving two different word-classes, is far from subtle. But, as we shall see later, there are cases of propria where the underlying grammatical unacceptability is of a somewhat more subtle kind. These latter cases in particular but also, though to a somewhat lesser extent, all cases of grammatical unacceptability short of involving two different word-classes seem to me to require some treatment, and

I will accordingly regard all these as constituting genuine propria.

It will have become clear what I exclude from genuine propria. We are now in a position to consider how genuine propria is to be accounted for.

9.2. Propria due to grammatical unacceptability

As far as propria due to grammatical unacceptability is concerned, there is little need for theoretical discussion. What follows, therefore, will consist of practical analyses, whose main aim is to indicate the variety, as well as sometimes the subtlety, of the grammatical factors which can cause propria. Needless to say, our list of such grammatical factors is far from exhaustive.

(1) Direct object versus infinitive

We have already touched on one kind of grammatical unacceptability in relation to 'bear', 'endure', 'stand' and 'abide'. Another example is provided by 'merit' and 'deserve' when they both carry the sense-meaning of "be worthy of". 'Merit' and 'deserve' are synonymous in many sentences where they combine with a direct object, as in

(9.4) This problem deserves/merits our attention.

(9.5) He deserves/merits promotion.

(9.6) These people deserve/merit our help.

However, only 'deserve' is capable of being followed by an infinitive construction, so that if we replace 'deserve' with 'merit' in (9.7) and (9.8) grammatical unacceptability will result:

(9.7) He deserves/*merits to be punished.

(9.8) He deserves/*merits to be more widely read.

(2) Noun phrase versus that clause as object

'Stress', 'emphasize' and 'underline' (fig.) are synonymous in a wide range of sentences where they are followed by a noun phrase as object, as in

(9.9) The speaker stressed/emphasized/underlined the importance of tolerance.

Unlike the first two senses, however, 'underline' cannot take as object a that clause, and is thus incapable of replacing 'stress' or 'emphasize' in, for example

(9.10) The speaker stressed/emphasized/*underlined that tolerance was important.

(3) 'Of' + complement versus that clause

'Unaware' and 'ignorant' are synonymous when followed by 'of' plus a complement, as in

(9.11) You are not unaware/ignorant of the reasons for his behaviour.

(9.12) He was unaware/ignorant of my presence.

(9.13) I am quite unaware/ignorant of what his plans are.

However, when 'unaware' is followed by a that clause, it cannot be replaced by 'ignorant'. In (9.14) and (9.15), for example, only 'unaware' is acceptable:

(9.14) You are not unaware/*ignorant that he behaved badly.

(9.15) He was unaware/*ignorant that I was present.

(4) Attributive versus predicative

While 'uphill' is among the class of adjectives which are grammatically confined to the attributive position, no such restriction attaches to 'difficult'. Thus it is possible for the two senses to be synonymous only in attributive position, as in

(9.16) It is a (an) difficult/uphill task.

When 'difficult' is used in the predicative position, 'uphill' cannot serve as an acceptable replacement even when, as in (9.17), the argument is within its semantic range:

(9.17) This task is difficult/*uphill.

(5) Affirmative versus negative

'Stand', 'endure', 'bear' and 'abide' can be simultaneously synonymous only in sentences where the feature of negation is present, as in

(9.18) He can't stand/endure/bear/abide teasing.

Of the four senses, only 'stand' and (to a lesser extent) 'endure' are not limited to such sentences and are therefore acceptable in, for example

(9.19) He can stand/endure/*bear/*abide teasing.

For 'bear' and 'abide' to be used acceptably, there is the further requirement, according to OALDCE, that they be preceded by the modal auxiliaries 'can' or 'could'.

(6) Different surface orderings of the same case array

A clear example here is the set 'notify', 'report' and 'inform', whose relative distribution concerning synonymy is exemplified by

(9.20) They notified/reported/*informed the theft to the police.

(9.21) They notified/informed/*reported the police of the theft.

As we can see from (9.20) and (9.21), 'notify' is the only sense out of the three that is acceptable in both sentences, where it shares a communis with 'report' and 'inform' respectively. The other two senses are each grammatically restricted in its own way, and there is no communis between them. Now the propria concerning the three senses can be explained in terms of the surface orderings in which they are allowed to appear for realizing the same case array, which consists of A(gentive), D(ative) and O(bjective) (cf. Fillmore, 1968, 1971). This will become clear if we represent the permissible surface ordering(s) of the three cases for 'notify', 'report' and 'inform' as follows:

Notify { A V(erb) O to D }
 { A V(erb) D of O }

Report (A V(erb) O to D)

Inform (A V(erb) D of O)

(7) Different case arrays

Verbs that are synonymous in some sentences may also fail to be interchangeable in others because they do not coincide in their permissible range of underlying case arrays. For example, 'crowd' and 'throng' are synonymous in (9.22) and (9.23), but only 'crowd' can be used in (9.24) and (9.25):

(9.22) They crowded/thronged through the gates into the stadium.

(9.23) The railway station was crowded/thronged with people.

(9.24) They crowded/*thronged the bus with passengers.

(9.25) They crowded/*thronged people into the bus.

The case array exemplified in (9.22) consists of Agentive, Path and Goal. In (9.23) we have the case array of Locative and Objective. A different case array underlies (9.24) and (9.25), where we find Agentive, Locative and Objective with two alternative surface orderings. Both 'crowd' and 'throng' are permissible within the first two case arrays, but only 'crowd' can occur in the third.

(8) Restriction on phrasal conjunction

'Distinguish' and 'tell', when carrying the sense-meaning "differentiate", are synonymous in a construction such as

(9.26) He can't distinguish/tell { margarine from butter.
 butter from margarine.

When phrasal conjunction is involved, however, as in (9.27), only 'distinguish' is acceptable:

(9.27) He can't distinguish/*tell between {margarine and butter.
butter and margarine.

(9) Obligatory syntactic constituents

'Grateful' and 'indebted' are synonymous in

(9.28) I am grateful/indebted to you for your help.

But if we take away 'to you', to yield

(9.29) I am grateful/*indebted for your help.

then only 'grateful' is acceptable. It seems reasonable to generalize that a prepositional phrase of the form 'to + person(s) (to whom gratitude is due)', while optional for 'grateful', is obligatory for 'indebted'; hence the unacceptability of 'indebted' in (9.29). The same seems to apply, though perhaps less strictly, to their nominal cognates, i.e. 'gratitude' and 'indebtedness'.

(10) Positions in a sentence

When two senses share the same meaning and the same word-class, propria may nevertheless arise because they differ as regards the positions in a sentence in which they can occur. Thus 'however' and 'though', when serving as sentence connectors and meaning roughly "all the same", are synonymous in

(9.30) Later, however/though, he was persuaded to go.

(9.31) He was later persuaded to go, however/though.

but only 'however' is acceptable in

(9.32) However/*though, he was later persuaded to go.

(9.33) He was, however/*though, later persuaded to go.

(9.34) He was persuaded later, however/*though, to go.

It is safe to suggest that in this particular use 'though' is not acceptable in initial position, and this explains (9.32). As for (9.33) and (9.34), it is difficult to give a definite explanation. But it seems that, unlike 'however', 'though' is normally used only when there is a major break in the sentence, such as we find in (9.30).

The same phenomenon is exemplified by 'enough' and 'sufficient'. When used as an adjective, 'enough', but not 'sufficient', "may either precede or follow a noun" (OALDCE: 290). Thus, while the two senses are synonymous in

(9.35) There is enough/sufficient food for everybody.

only 'enough' can be used in

(9.36) There is food enough/*sufficient for everybody.

A further example comes from Lee's study of 'also' and 'too', which we have already had occasion to refer to. Among the sentences instanced by Lee where 'also' is not replaceable by 'too' in the same position are the following (1965: 257):

- (i) Also, there was a cat's affronted look in its eyes.
- (ii) Mr D., who is also Minister for External Affairs, can retain his Cabinet post ...
- (iii) The British and French governments, and especially the former, also showed little understanding of ...
- (iv) Well, there's also a coastal southern type.
- (v) 'Very jolly', the Ormerod man murmured, also looking at Jenny ...
- (vi) Also drawn up outside it was a newer and much more expensive-looking car ...

By way of accounting for cases like these Lee says:

About one seventh of the occurrences of also where it is irreplaceable, or not normally replaceable, by too in the same position, have been classed as initial. These include not only initial occurrence in the sentence but initial occurrence in the clause or phrase (1965: 258).

The rest of the examples are more difficult to classify, but it is certainly correct to say that 'too' is much less flexible as regards the positions in a sentence in which it can occur.

(11) Gradable versus non-gradable terms

'Nearly' and 'almost' have been cited by Collinson (1939: 58) and Ullmann (1962: 142) as rare examples of terms which are universally interchangeable without any change in meaning, cognitive or otherwise. But, as Baldinger has pointed out, this is in fact not the case, for "only nearly is negatable or gradable" (1980: 239). Thus, while 'nearly' and 'almost' are synonymous in

(9.37) He nearly/almost succeeded.

'almost' is not acceptable in -

(9.38) In fact, he did not nearly/*almost succeed.

(9.39) All the same, he more nearly/*almost succeeded than last time.

(9.40) He very nearly/*almost succeeded.

9.3. Propria due to semantic unacceptability

When two items are found to be synonymous in some sentences but

not synonymous in other sentences because one of the items is unacceptable or odd, it is perfectly plausible in many cases to seek a semantic explanation in terms of polysemy, as we saw earlier. Such an explanation, however, is clearly not open to us as regards the following:

(9.41) depend/hinge

- (a) The outcome of the election depends/hinges on how the floating voters will cast their vote.
- (b) The outcome of the election depends/*hinges only to a small extent on how the floating voters will cast their vote.

(9.42) result/fruit

- (a) His success is the result/fruit of { hard work.
good method.
- (b) His success is the result/*fruit of luck.
- (c) His failure is the result/*fruit of bad method.

(9.43) obstacle/impediment

- (a) The border dispute is a (an) obstacle/impediment to peace in the region.
- (b) The lack of books in the library is a (an) obstacle/?impediment to his academic progress.
- (c) His lack of concentration is a (an) impediment/?obstacle to his academic progress.

Now in none of these cases is it plausible to account for the co-existence of communis and propria by postulating for one or both items two sense-meanings only one of which is shared by both items. Nor is there any plausibility in attributing the propria to grammatical unacceptability. It is somewhat less certain whether or not we should attribute the propria to purely collocational unacceptability. What is clear, however, is that, given that semantic unacceptability is 'motivated' while purely collocational unacceptability is arbitrary, a semantic explanation of propria is more powerful than, and therefore preferable to, a purely collocational one. There will thus be an unnecessary loss in explanatory power if we are content with a purely collocational explanation when a semantic one can be found - as I think it can in the three cases in question.

We thus find ourselves again searching for a semantic explanation, but this time not in terms of polysemy. Instead, our explanation will be on roughly the following lines: Although all the occurrences of the one item are assignable to a single sense and the

same applies to all the occurrences of the other item, there is a difference in meaning between the two senses such that *propria* occurs when what element of meaning of the one sense is not shared by the other sense comes into conflict with some aspect of the sentence or context in question. What we have here is essentially an explanation of the facts which is (1) semantic in character and yet (2) does not invoke polysemy.

In adopting such an explanation, however, we will lay ourselves open to the charge of inconsistency unless we are at the same time prepared to concede that the same difference in meaning between the two senses that accounts for the *propria* is also somehow (we will come back to this crucial word presently) present between the two senses in sentences where they are interchangeable. To concede this is indeed what we must do. There is a sense in which the difference in question is disguised in those sentences permitting interchangeability but is accentuated in other sentences by the presence of what might be called diagnostic elements - so called because they help to diagnose, as it were, the difference between the two senses. It is sometimes difficult to identify the diagnostic elements and more difficult still, once the diagnostic elements have been found, to pinpoint the features in them that render a sense unacceptable. These latter we may refer to as diagnostic features. But whether successful or not in discovering the diagnostic elements and features, we must concede the point made at the beginning of this paragraph.

Once we concede that such semantic difference as is responsible for the *propria* attaches somehow also to the occurrences of the two senses in sentences where they are interchangeable, however, will we not overcome one inconsistency only to commit another if, having conceded this point, we then treat these occurrences as synonymous? The answer is 'no', because the semantic difference exists between these occurrences of the two senses only in one of two ways (hence 'somehow') neither of which is inconsistent with the presence of synonymy as we conceive it (i.e. in terms of pragmatic and performance equivalence). In the first place, the semantic difference may exist only as a mere reflection of the semantic difference on the level of sense - a 'mere reflection' because the semantic difference on the level of sense is neutralized on the level of

occurrence by sentential or contextual factors (exemplification later). And since it is neutralized in a sentence/context, the semantic difference will not prevent two occurrences from being synonymous, given our conception of synonymy in terms of pragmatic equivalence. In the second place, the semantic difference may exist to just such an extent that it is noticeable by the standard of careful judgement and reflection but not by the standard of everyday communication. And since it is not noticeable by the standard of everyday communication in a sentence/context, the semantic difference will not prevent two occurrences from being synonymous, given our conception of synonymy in terms of performance equivalence.

It is beyond the scope of the present study to make systematic proposals as to how to ascertain the semantic difference between senses: to do so would be to embark on a highly complex task in its own right (cf. Bendix, 1971). Nevertheless it behoves us to give at least some rough indication of the semantic differences to which the propria in our three examples is attributable respectively.

'Depend' and 'hinge', as (9.41 a, b) suggests, seem to be in incorporating distribution in that 'hinge' seems to be universally replaceable by 'depend' but not conversely. In (9.41b) the unacceptability of 'hinge' appears to be attributable to the presence of 'only to a small extent', which may thus be looked upon provisionally as the diagnostic element. As to the likely diagnostic feature, we may work on the initial hypothesis that it has something to do with the notion of degree. This hypothesis can be rendered more powerful (i.e. more specific) by observing what will happen to 'depend' and 'hinge' when the hypothesized diagnostic element is replaced by other expressions of degree. To make the results systematic and revealing, we will sort these expressions into a number of sets, each representing a particular degree, as follows:

- (a) completely, entirely, etc.
- (b) largely, in large part, to a large extent, to a great extent, considerably, etc.
- (c) (only) partly, (only) to some extent, somewhat, etc.
- (d) (only) to a small extent, etc.

Now while 'depend' remains invariably acceptable, we find some interesting variety in the way in which 'hinge' responds to these substitutions. There are essentially three observations to make.

First, although the (a) expressions will not render 'hinge' unacceptable in (9.41b), they themselves seem to be somewhat redundant, in a way that they are not when occurring with 'depend'. From this it seems reasonable to draw the inference that something like "entirely" (or "completely") constitutes part of the meaning of 'hinge'. Apparently, however, this inference comes into conflict with our second observation, namely, that 'hinge' is acceptable in (9.41b) when used in combination with the (b) expressions. For from this observation there follows the inference that "entirely" need not constitute part of the meaning of 'hinge': otherwise (b) expressions would render 'hinge' unacceptable. Before we try to resolve this apparent contradiction, let us complete the picture with the third observation, which is already partially revealed to us in (9.41b) in its original form. It is this: 'hinge' is incompatible with the (c) and (d) expressions. We are thus led to make the further inference that part of the meaning of 'hinge' must consist in the stipulation of a degree that is greater than what is represented by the (c) and (d) expressions.

In the light of these three observations and inferences, it is now possible to piece together a more powerful hypothesis concerning the meaning of 'hinge' and one which is free from contradiction. Over and above "depend" (i.e. the meaning of 'depend'), according to this hypothesis, the meaning of 'hinge' contains a disjunction of two further features, i.e. "entirely or largely". Hence the inability of 'hinge' to combine with (c) or (d) expressions. But there is the further point that of the two additional features "entirely" is unmarked while "largely" is marked (cf. Hofmann, 1976: 14 for a type of meaning which he calls 'presumptions'). Hence in the absence of any indication to the contrary, as in (9.41a), 'hinge' will mean something like "depend entirely"; hence the felt redundancy of (a) expressions when used with 'hinge'; and hence also the need for some accompanying (b) expressions when 'hinge' is intended to mean "depend largely" instead.

At this point it is worth looking at how 'hinge' is characterized in Webster:

Hinge is sometimes used interchangeably with depend; it may retain much of its literal suggestion of a movable part (as a door or a gate) that opens or closes upon hinges and then usually implies the cardinal (my underlining) point upon

which a decision, a controversy, or an outcome ultimately (my underlining) rests. ... (the outcome of the war hinges on the ability of our forces to outmove every strategic move of the enemy) (the point on which the decision must finally hinge ...) (the whole case being built up by Mr. Kennon was going to hinge in large part upon a single issue - was Clifford under the influence of liquor ...) (p.227).

I have underlined 'cardinal' and 'ultimately' because they help to bring out what there is in common between this characterization and the account which we have just given. When, as in the second example in the above characterization, an (a) expression (i.e. 'finally') is used to modify 'hinge', what it does seems more to add emphasis to an element of meaning already present in 'hinge' than to make a new semantic contribution to the phrase.

Now that we have sketched the semantic difference between 'depend' and 'hinge' which seems to be responsible for the propria, we may next inquire briefly, in the light of this hypothesized difference, whether and to what extent the occurrences of the two senses are synonymous when they are interchangeable. To simplify the issue somewhat, we may break down the question into two, the first concerning 'depend' and 'hinge' when they are unmodified, the second concerning the two senses when they are modified by (b) expressions. With regard to the first question, it seems that while 'hinge' means "depend entirely" when unmarked (or unmodified), a similar principle is at work in the case of 'depend' such that when unmodified 'depend' itself leans in the direction of "depend entirely" (cf. Grice, 1975 for his maxim of 'quantity'). Needless to say, this presumption can be perfectly well negated or contradicted by (c) or (d) expressions, but in that event 'hinge' will not be interchangeable with 'depend'. If in this first type of case 'depend' and 'hinge' are close enough in meaning to be synonymous, the two senses are even closer in meaning in the second type of case, where they are modified by (b) expressions. For here what relevant meaning of 'hinge' is lacking in 'depend' (i.e. "largely") is explicitly made up for by the presence of (b) expressions. To put it another way, the difference between 'depend' and 'hinge' on the level of sense is here neutralized on the level of occurrence by sentential factors.

We turn now to our second example, which concerns 'result' and 'fruit'. On the level of semantic acceptability 'result' and

'fruit' also seem to be in incorporating distribution. However that may be, let us focus on our example sentences, where we do find 'result' and 'fruit' in incorporating distribution. Now what meaning 'result' and 'fruit' have in common consists in a relation involving cause and effect. Where, as in (9.42), we have the simple structure 'X is the result/fruit of Y', Y expresses the cause and X the effect. While 'result' seems to be fairly unrestricted as regards the nature of either cause or effect, 'fruit' is subject to restrictions as regards both.

In (9.42b), where 'fruit' is unacceptable, the diagnostic element is quite clearly 'luck'. As to the likely diagnostic feature, comparison with (9.42a) suggests the hypothesis that the meaning of what occurs in the cause-position in the case of 'fruit' has to contain (explicitly or by implication) some element of agency, which is present in "hard work" and "good method" but missing from "luck". It is worth referring in this connection to CED, where the relevant sense of 'fruit' is defined as "the result or consequence of an action or effort" (p.585). We may indeed follow CED in regarding "action or effort" as the restrictions on what can normally fill the role of cause for 'fruit'. The above hypothesis gains support from the fact that 'fruit' will remain acceptable in (9.42a) when 'hard work' or 'good method' is replaced by other expressions denoting some kind of action or effort (e.g. 'dedication', 'perseverance' and 'trial and error') while 'fruit' will remain unacceptable in (9.42b) when 'luck' is replaced by other expressions which lack any implication of action or effort (e.g. 'chance', 'lack of obstacles/opposition' and 'favours from patrons').

Moving on to (9.42c), it seems plausible to attribute the unacceptability of 'fruit' to what occurs in the effect-position, i.e. 'failure'. Here again comparison with (9.42a) is revealing. In the light of this comparison we may form the hypothesis that 'fruit' requires of what occurs in the effect-position that in normal, non-sarcastic use it should express a consequence that is desired by the person(s) most directly involved. This hypothesis is plausible in view of the fact that the unacceptability of 'fruit' is unaffected when 'failure' is replaced by other expressions in which no implication of desirability is present (e.g. 'defeat', 'lack of success' and 'inefficiency'). It should also be noted

that from this hypothesis there follows yet a further restriction on 'fruit' as regards cause: Since the effect is desired, the cause must be such that it is normally regarded as conducive to the bringing about of the effect. Thus (9.42a) will become unacceptable if we replace 'good' with 'bad' in 'good method'.

The relevant sense of 'fruit' may now be roughly characterized as "the desired result of an action or effort conducive to the achievement of the result". By exhibiting the difference between 'fruit' and 'result' in a systematic way, this characterization explains why in (9.42b) and (9.42c) 'result' is not replaceable by 'fruit'. But what happens when, as in (9.42a), the two senses are interchangeable? It seems, at least in (9.42a), that what is implied by 'fruit' as regards the nature of cause and effect without the aid of sentence/context we may, when 'result' is used in place of 'fruit', infer without much difficulty with the aid sentence/context. Differences between the two senses, in the respects to which we have drawn attention as well as possibly in others, undoubtedly exist even when the two senses are interchangeable, but these differences will in sentences like (9.42a) be neutralized to an extent sufficient for the two senses to function synonymously within our conception of synonymy.

While a case of hypothesized incorporating distribution is easily in danger of falsification upon the discovery of a counter instance, by the same token a hypothesis of overlapping distribution can be verified with much greater certainty, as is the case with 'obstacle' and 'impediment'.

For an account of the semantic difference between these two senses which is responsible for the propria in (9.43b) and (9.43c) respectively, it is relevant to distinguish for 'obstacle' and 'impediment' two senses each, of which (from a purely synchronic point of view) one may be said to be literal and the other somewhat figurative. The latter senses of 'obstacle' and 'impediment' are already exemplified in (9.43b) and (9.43c) respectively. It is only when these somewhat figurative senses are in operation that 'obstacle' and 'impediment' are sometimes interchangeable, as in (9.43a). We are not concerned with the literal senses in their own right, but only to the extent that they help throw light on the figurative senses. The literal senses are exemplified in

(9.44) The horse tripped over the last obstacle.

(9.45) He has a serious speech impediment.

What meaning is shared by the four senses may be specified by means of a proposition consisting of three arguments, namely, 'X hinders/prevents Y for Z', in which X stands for the entity that hinders/prevents, Y for the action or state hindered or prevented, and Z for the entity affected by the hindrance/prevention. All the four senses, it seems, imply these three arguments, although they may not all be realized or, when they are realized, realized in a discrete manner. In (9.43a) 'the border dispute' is X, 'peace' is Y, and 'the region' is Z. In (9.43b) 'the lack of books in the library' is X, 'academic progress' is Y, and 'him' (inferred from 'his') is Z. (9.43c) is the same as (9.43b) except that 'his lack of concentration' is X. The arguments are less tangible in (9.44) and (9.45), but they can still be identified or, when not overtly present, inferred. In (9.44) 'the last obstacle' is X while 'the horse' is Z; Y is not overtly present, but we can safely infer that it is something like 'advance'. In (9.45) 'a serious ... impediment' is X, 'speech' is Y, and 'he' is Z.

It may be mentioned in passing that what differentiates the literal from the figurative senses is the nature of X. More relevantly, we may observe that an important difference between the two literal senses lies in the nature of relationship between X and Z. In the case of 'obstacle', it is clear that X is outside of, or separate from, Z. In the case of 'impediment', on the other hand, there is a sense in which X is within, or part of, Z. We now come to the important point, namely, that the difference we have just identified between the two literal senses applies also to the two figurative senses, though - and this is also an important point - in a less strict way (as we shall see presently).

We are now in a position to account for (9.43b) and (9.43c). In (9.43b), 'impediment' is unacceptable because it is clear that the X in question is external to Z. It is just the opposite in (9.43c), where it is equally clear that the X in question is internal to Z, so that 'obstacle' is unacceptable.

In view of the reasons for which 'impediment' and 'obstacle' are unacceptable in (9.43b) and (9.43c) respectively, it must be asked why they are interchangeable in (9.43a). The explanation, I

think, lies in the observation already hinted at at the end of the last paragraph but one. Now there are sentences/contexts where the relationship between X and Z is not a straightforward matter of X being internal or external to Z and where consequently it is often possible to make out a case for both. This is particularly true when Z refers to a geographical area rather than one or more individuals. In (9.43a), for example, it seems reasonable to say that X is internal to Z, since the border dispute clearly takes place within the region. On the other hand, it is also plausible to say that X is not internal to Z in any simple and straightforward manner, because perhaps not all the states in the region and certainly not all the individuals living in the region are necessarily involved, in which case these other states and individuals are not to be identified as Z. From this indeterminacy it follows that there will be no definite incompatibility between either 'obstacle' or 'impediment' and what in clear-cut cases like (9.43b) and (9.43c) would constitute a diagnostic feature. There is correspondingly no definite semantic reason why 'obstacle' and 'impediment' should not be interchangeable. What is more, to the extent that the relationship between X and Z is inherently indeterminate, this determinacy will not be resolved by the use of the one sense rather than the other. If so, then the semantic difference between 'obstacle' and 'impediment' on the level of sense is prevented from making any material contribution on the level of occurrence, which means that they are synonymous according to our conception of synonymy.

Examples like these could be multiplied, but the three we have given will suffice to illustrate the argument that in many cases of propria it is plausible to supply a semantic explanation without at the same time having either to invoke polysemy or to imply that communis does not in fact exist. Although the examples themselves may well be open to question, I believe the substance of the argument is valid. There must thus be a place in our explanatory framework for the type of propria which in the heading of this section we referred to as 'propria due to semantic unacceptability'.

9.4. Propria due to purely collocational unacceptability

A semantic explanation of propria, as we have already pointed out, is more powerful than, and consequently preferable to, a purely collocational one. But equally, to be adequate, a semantic explanation must satisfy the requirement that there be identifiable semantic difference between the two senses in question also when they are interchangeable, although we may then add that this difference is neutralized or immaterial. When this requirement is not met under otherwise identical circumstances (i.e. having ruled out a grammatical explanation and a semantic explanation in terms of polysemy), we must seek instead a purely collocational one.

Such an explanation is called for, for example, in the case of 'generous' and 'handsome' (cf. Katz, 1972: 44). Now one of the senses of 'handsome' may be glossed as "generous", as is commonly done in dictionaries. When used in this sense, 'handsome' is not applicable to human beings. From this fact we may for our present limited purpose derive, to adopt Katz and Fodor's (1963) formulation and form of representation, the selection restriction (-Human). This means that, of the noun phrases of which 'generous' can be predicated, 'handsome' is capable of being predicated of only those which contain, or imply, the semantic marker (-Human). 'Generous', which is otherwise synonymous with 'handsome' as regards the relevant sense, is not subject to this particular selection restriction. Thus, of the following sentences, 'generous' is replaceable without change of meaning by 'handsome' only in the first two:

- (9.46) He gave me a generous/handsome gift.
- (9.47) He was offered generous/handsome terms.
- (9.48) He is a generous/*handsome man.
- (9.49) He is generous/*handsome with his money.
- (9.50) He is generous/*handsome in giving help.

When the noun phrases in question contain the semantic marker (Human), as in the last three sentences, 'handsome' cannot serve as a synonymous replacement for 'generous'. That 'handsome' in the sense of "generous" is not applicable to human beings is further testified by the fact that

- (9.51) He is a handsome man.

does not feel ambiguous. It might also be mentioned in passing that

when used in the sense of "generous" 'handsome' seems normally to prefer the attributive position. Thus while 'handsome' is perfectly acceptable in (9.46) and (9.47) it is somewhat less so in, say

(9.52) His gift to me was very generous/?handsome.

(9.53) The terms offered to him were generous/?handsome.

The question now arises as to what is the justification in cases like this for postulating different selection restrictions (i.e. giving a purely collocational explanation) as opposed to differences of meaning (i.e. giving a semantic explanation). McCawley, for example, objects to the concept of selection restrictions thus:

I see no reason for believing that selectional restrictions have any independent status in linguistics. All of the selectional restrictions which I have seen cited either are completely predictable from the meaning of the lexical item in question or are not in fact real restrictions. ...

As regards the status of selectional restrictions as an independent factor in language, if selectional restrictions were not predictable from the meanings of the lexical items in question, then it would be possible to have different lexical items which had the same meaning but differed in selectional restrictions. While a number of examples of such lexical items have been proposed, in each case the difference between the lexical items has turned out actually to be one of meaning rather than one of selectional restrictions (1970: 167).

These objections seem to me to be clearly invalid as regards the relative distribution of 'generous' and 'handsome' exemplified in the above sentences. Here the justification for attributing the propria to different selection restrictions rather than to differences in meaning is simply that there is no identifiable semantic difference, potential or actual, between 'generous' and 'handsome' in the communis (i.e. (9.46) and (9.47)) (such that it would account for the propria in (9.48) to (9.50)). In fact, it is not implausible, though undesirable (we will give the reasons presently), to seek a semantic explanation for the propria in terms of polysemy by distinguishing two senses for 'generous' differing only in selection restrictions, such that the sense with the selection restriction (-Human) would be in coincident distribution with 'handsome'. If so, just as it is wrong automatically to infer that A^S and B^S differ in meaning when A^S differs in meaning from $B^{S'}$ (i.e. another sense assignable to the same lexeme, B), it is equally wrong automatically to infer the existence of some semantic difference between 'generous' and 'handsome' in (9.46) and (9.47)

from their propria in (9.48) to (9.50). When, for reasons to be given presently, we establish one sense for 'generous' instead of two, exactly the same point holds. And once we decide to attribute the occurrences of 'generous' in (9.46) to (9.50) to a single sense, then as a matter of consistency we must account for (9.48) to (9.50) by postulating selection rather than semantic differences between 'generous' and 'handsome', for the simple reason that there is no identifiable difference between the two items in (9.46) and (9.47) (such that it would account for the propria in (9.48) to (9.50)).

There are two reasons why it is undesirable to distinguish two senses for 'generous' in the manner hypothetically suggested above. First, it would be gratuitous to do so from the broad point of view of semantic description as opposed to the narrow point of view of the description of synonymy. Secondly, it would be less economical to distinguish two senses than to identify one sense and then supply it with selection restrictions. It is our refusal, for these reasons, to distinguish two senses for 'generous' that gives rise to the need for a purely collocational explanation.

Let us look now at another example where the propria requires a purely collocational explanation. Although 'considerable' and 'tidy' have a sense-meaning in common, which may be glossed as "much; a lot of" (CED), they differ in their collocational restrictions (hereafter I will use 'collocational restriction' as a general term in discussing purely collocational unacceptability and reserve 'selection restriction' for referring to a particular type of collocational restriction). While 'considerable' is widely applicable, 'tidy' is highly restricted, though in a way which is difficult to pin down. We may start with the following sentences:

(9.54) It cost a considerable/tidy sum of money.

(9.55) It took a considerable/?tidy amount of time.

(9.56) He has written a considerable/?tidy number of books.

(9.57) It is a considerable/?tidy distance.

In the light of these sentences it is tempting to form the hypothesis that 'tidy' is subject to a collocational restriction specifiable as 'sum of money'. It is important to note that as a collocational restriction 'sum of money' can be construed in two radically different ways: as a concept on the one hand and as an expression on the other. If we follow the first interpretation, it

is obvious that the above hypothesis will prove false. For despite the fact that the concept of "sum of money" is present in, say, the meaning of 'expense' and 'salary', 'tidy' remains odd in

(9.58) He bought the house at considerable/?tidy expense.

(9.59) He earns a considerable/?tidy salary.

In fact, even 'tidy amount of money' does not sound quite as natural as 'tidy sum of money'. If we now follow the second interpretation and construe 'sum of money' as an expression instead, the above hypothesis will prove partly true - but only partly true, because not only is 'tidy amount of money' also acceptable there are also other combinations into which 'tidy' can enter, such as 'a tidy penny' and 'They do swear a tidy bit' (SOED). Let us make the assumption - one which, if false, will not affect the point being made - that 'sum of money', 'amount of money', 'penny' and 'bit' are the only expressions that 'tidy' can modify. This would mean that, instead of being able to attach to 'tidy' a generic collocational restriction by means of a concept, we are reduced to actually listing these expressions.

There thus emerge two different types of collocational restriction. In the one type, exemplified by 'generous' and 'handsome', the collocational restriction is specifiable in terms of a concept (or a disjunction of concepts), whereby it will cover all the expressions possessing that concept. In the other type, exemplified by 'considerable' and 'tidy' (under the assumption we have made), the collocational restriction has to be stated by actually listing the one or more expressions involved, which makes generalization impossible and, where only one expression is involved, also unnecessary.

These two types of collocational restriction seem to correspond to the last two types of collocational restriction identified by Palmer in the following:

We can, perhaps, see three kinds of collocational restriction. First, some are based wholly on the meaning of the item as in the unlikely green cow. Secondly, some are based on range - a word may be used with a whole set of words that have some semantic features in common. This accounts for the unlikelihood of The rhododendron passed away and equally of the pretty boy (pretty being used with words denoting females). Thirdly, some restrictions are collocational in the strictest sense, involving neither meaning nor range, as addled with eggs and brains. There may, of course, be borderline cases (1976: 97).

Palmer's first type of collocational restriction may be seen to correspond to what we have chosen to set up as a radically separate category, namely, *propria* due to semantic unacceptability. Thus, although Palmer is not dealing with collocational restrictions in relation to synonymy, to the extent that his categories coincide with ours they will have been shown also to apply to the nature of the *propria* of otherwise synonymous senses.

A very similar distinction is drawn by Lehrer, who identifies

Two opposing hypotheses on the co-occurrence of words: the lexical and the semantic hypothesis. The lexical hypothesis states that co-occurrence restrictions are a function of particular lexical items; this is the position argued by Firth and Halliday. The semantic position is that co-occurrence restrictions are a function of the meaning of words, and such restrictions must be stated, not for lexical items per se, but for some sort of abstract semantic features (1974: 173).

And, as far as synonymy is concerned, Lehrer is certainly right, as our foregoing discussion will have shown, when she says:

Although the two positions conflict, they may both be partially true - that is, each may be true for different parts of the vocabulary (1974: 173).

It should be noted, however, that what Lehrer refers to as the semantic position appears to conflate what in our classification are distinguished as *propria* due to semantic unacceptability and *propria* due to the first kind of purely collocational unacceptability (as exemplified by 'generous' and 'handsome'). As we have already argued, there is a valid and necessary distinction to be drawn between the two. By way of shedding further light on this distinction as well as on the distinction between the two kinds of purely collocational unacceptability, it will be helpful now to consider how 'selection restrictions' fit into our account as these are conceived by Katz and Fodor (1963).

In Katz and Fodor's proposal, a reading (or path) in a dictionary entry consists of four portions, reconstructed in the light of conventional dictionaries (1963: 191). These are (1) a grammatical marker, (2) one or more semantic markers, (3) (optionally) one or more semantic distinguishers, and (4) a specification of selection restrictions. Semantic markers, according to Katz and Fodor,

are the elements in terms of which semantic relations are expressed in a theory. ... The semantic markers assigned to a lexical item in a dictionary entry are intended to

reflect whatever systematic semantic relations hold between that item and the rest of the vocabulary of the language (1963: 187).

Separate from these are distinguishers, which "are intended to reflect what is idiosyncratic about its meaning" (i.e. the meaning of the lexical item in question) (1963: 187). In addition, a specification of selection restrictions

will be affixed to the terminal element of a path (either the distinguisher or the last semantic marker if there is no distinguisher) and will be construed, relative to the projection rules, as providing a necessary and sufficient condition for a semantically acceptable combination (1963: 191).

Now, for our purpose, the first portion of a lexical reading, i.e. the grammatical specification, may be ignored. As regards the rest of the reading, two points are of interest to our present concern. First, semantic markers and distinguishers may be seen to make up the semantic characterization of a lexical reading. This will give us a two-way distinction between the semantic characterization of a sense on the one hand and its selection restrictions on the other. Secondly, distinguishers have no place in selection restrictions, which are stated purely in terms of semantic (and syntactic) markers.

As far as the first point is concerned, Katz and Fodor are clearly justified in distinguishing between the semantic characterization of a sense (i.e. a reading or a path) and the selection restrictions attaching to it. Elsewhere Katz (1972: 89-97) has provided a comprehensive defence of this distinction. With regard to the explanation of the propria of otherwise synonymous senses, we have also seen the need for such a distinction in order to do justice to the facts to be explained.

When we come to the second point, we will at once notice that, as conceived by Katz and Fodor, selection restrictions coincide (to the extent that they do) with only the first kind of collocational restriction we discussed earlier, i.e. such collocational restrictions as can be stated as a generalization in terms of one or more concepts. Semantic markers, out of which selection restrictions are made, may indeed be looked upon as concepts. Thus, while Katz and Fodor's theory would account for the propria of 'generous' and 'handsome' in terms of selection restrictions, it cannot account for the propria of 'considerable' and 'tidy'. For in the latter case, it is not possible to identify, as the selection

restriction of 'tidy', a semantic marker which is demonstrably absent from the semantic characterization of those expressions with which 'tidy' cannot enter into acceptable combination. As a consequence, the unacceptability of 'tidy' in these combinations will have to be given a different treatment, if and when the need is seen to arise. While Katz and Fodor view such a treatment as outside the scope of a semantic theory, they are certainly right in principle in distinguishing between these two types of collocational unacceptability.

While on the subject, we may refer to a criticism of Katz and Fodor's concept of selection restrictions by Weinreich:

If ... addled were to be marked in its selection as restricted to eggs and brains, the restriction would be unlikely to be statable in terms of legitimate markers (without distinguishers); and again we would lack an explanation of how we know that in It's addled, the referent of it is an egg or a brain (1966: 407).

Now it seems clear that, like the unacceptability of 'tidy' in certain combinations, the unacceptability of 'addled' in, say, 'addled meat' or 'addled milk' is unlikely to be attributable to a breach of selection restrictions and therefore will not be accounted for in Katz and Fodor's theory. To this extent, Weinreich is unjustified in making the above criticism. Whether Katz and Fodor are right in leaving this type of collocational unacceptability out of the scope of a semantic theory is a different matter, with which we need not be concerned.

A more important point concerns the precise nature of the distinction between markers and distinguishers. Since the publication of Katz and Fodor's proposal in 1963, this aspect of their theory has come under a great deal of criticism (cf. Bolinger, 1965; Weinreich, 1966). Much of the criticism seems to boil down to the objection that there is no principled way of determining whether a particular feature is to be treated as a semantic marker or a distinguisher. When applied to selection restrictions, the objection would amount to saying that there is no principled way of determining whether a particular collocational restriction is or is not a selection restriction. Katz (1972: 82-8) has made an attempt to answer this objection, which, however, still persists. For our part, while not subscribing to the distinction between markers and distinguishers, we would do well to pay heed to the

motivation behind this distinction. Katz and Fodor write:

The distinction between markers and distinguishers is meant to coincide with the distinction between that part of the meaning of a lexical item which is systematic for the language and that part which is not (1963: 188).

The distinction between what is systematic and what is idiosyncratic, which has motivated the distinction between markers and distinguishers, is one which is clearly relevant to the statement of collocational restrictions. It is something of this distinction that underlies what we have decided to treat as two types of collocational restriction, which for ease of reference we may now call 'selection restrictions' and 'lexical restrictions' respectively. Beyond this point, however, we need not follow Katz and Fodor any further.

As we conceive the two types of collocational restriction, a selection restriction is one where descriptive generality is achieved by means of one or more concepts. A lexical restriction, on the other hand, is one which consists in actually listing the one or more expressions involved. Once this distinction is drawn, we may then follow the straightforward principle of maximum economy of statement, whereby provided descriptive adequacy can be achieved we automatically prefer selection restrictions to lexical restrictions, which we adopt only after attempts at finding selection restrictions have failed (cf. Lehrer, 1974: 176; Leech, 1974: 20).

In place of Katz and Fodor's form of a lexical reading, we will adopt, for our limited goal of accounting for the propria of otherwise synonymous senses, one which is made up of an undifferentiated semantic characterization and a specification of collocational restrictions, the latter being of two kinds. We are now in a position to provide a somewhat more formal and precise characterization of three types of unacceptability (or propria). An expression, A, is semantically unacceptable in a sentence, S, if and only if a diagnostic feature, DF, can be found which is incompatible with the semantic characterization of A. A is selectionally (collocationally) unacceptable in S if and only if a DF can be found which is incompatible with the collocational restriction of A. A is lexically (collocationally) unacceptable in S if and only if only a diagnostic element (but no DF) can be found which is incompatible with the collocational restriction of A. The first

two types of unacceptability have in common the fact that a systematic (as opposed to idiosyncratic) explanation is available through the discovery of one or more diagnostic features (i.e. concepts). The second and third types of unacceptability have in common the fact that their existence does not justify the reasoning that if A^S is not interchangeable with B^S in S^1 then there must be some, at least potential, difference in meaning between A^S and B^S in S^2 , where they are interchangeable. On account of the feature shared by the second and third types of unacceptability, we have grouped them together under the heading of collocational unacceptability, in contradistinction to the first type, which we examined in the last section under the heading of semantic unacceptability.

9.5. Exclusive versus preferred collocational range

It will be remembered that when dealing with 'tidy' we made the assumption that its collocational range consists only of 'sum of money', 'amount of money', 'penny' and 'bit'. Now if this assumption tested as a hypothesis were confirmed, we would have available a statement of what might be called the exclusive collocational range of 'tidy', showing all and only the environments in which 'tidy' can occur. In fact, however, it is far from certain that this hypothesis, or for that matter any hypothesis concerning the exclusive collocational range of 'tidy', will be confirmed; any such hypothesis is much more likely to meet with falsification. In this respect, 'tidy' is typical of numerous senses whose collocational range is limited as compared with an otherwise synonymous sense and yet whose collocational range is difficult or impossible to pin down with certainty. To the extent that such uncertainty can be shown to exist, a statement of exclusive collocational range must be regarded as unwarranted.

Instead, by way of acknowledging this uncertainty, it will be more appropriate to attach to such a sense a statement of what might be called its preferred collocational range, which comprises the one or more environments in which the sense has a propensity to occur. Once outside this range, the sense need not be unacceptable but will only have to be somewhat less natural, normal or expected.

As what seems to be an indication of preferred collocational range, conventional dictionaries sometimes resort to such informal devices as '(esp. of ____)', '(usu. of ____)' or '(of ____ etc.)', where what is placed in the blank serves to specify the preferred collocational range. Even when no such overt indications are given, it is often possible to infer the preferred collocational range of a sense from the similarity, or even identity, of examples to be found in diverse dictionaries.

'Tidy' is an example where we find both overt (or explicit) and covert (or implicit) indications. Thus, in OALDCE, for instance, the relevant sense of 'tidy' is partially defined as "fairly large (esp. of money)", while in this as well as in a host of other dictionaries the only examples given are 'a tidy sum of money' and '(cost) a tidy penny'. To the extent that these dictionaries reflect actual usage, 'a ____ sum of money' and 'a ____ penny', the latter being an idiom, may be regarded as constituting the preferred collocational range of 'tidy'. A statement to this effect will tell us in what environments 'tidy' normally or most naturally occurs, but it will not rule out any environments which fall outside this preferred collocational range.

It is clear that a statement of exclusive collocational range is more powerful than a statement of preferred collocational range. We may therefore adopt the principle whereby we will always aim for the former and will accept the latter only if no warranted statement of exclusive collocational range can be found. Natural language being the flexible instrument it is, a descriptive (as opposed to prescriptive) approach to it must always allow for a measure of indeterminacy and uncertainty as well as creativity (e.g. 'It will cost you a tidy yuan'). (Hence the need for '?' in addition to '+' for marking what appear to be odd sentences or expressions.) Subject to this caveat, there undoubtedly exist cases where a statement of exclusive collocational range is warranted.

A clear example is provided by 'gutter', which can be used synonymously with 'popular' in

(9.60) He loathes the popular/gutter press.

But when 'gutter' is used attributively in the sense of "popular" (though with a pejorative connotation largely absent from 'popular'),

'press' constitutes its entire collocational range, so that 'gutter' is unacceptable even in

(9.61) He loathes the popular/*gutter papers.

What we have here, then, is an example where we are able to supply a statement of exclusive collocational range ('e-statement' for short) with at least a reasonable amount of confidence. And, as we made clear earlier, when such a statement is warranted, it is to be preferred, for being more powerful, to a statement of preferred collocational range ('p-statement' for short). However, even where an e-statement is warranted there may still be a useful role for a p-statement to play in specifying the collocational properties of a sense. Let us assume, going back to an earlier example, that the e-range (i.e. exclusive collocational range) of 'tidy' indeed comprises 'a _____ sum of money', 'a _____ penny', 'a _____ amount of money' and 'a _____ bit'. Let us assume further that the first two of these environments indeed make up the p-range (i.e. preferred collocational range) of 'tidy'. Under these circumstances, a combination of an e-statement and a p-statement would provide a more powerful account of the collocational properties of 'tidy' than either statement alone.

So far we have used 'collocational range' as a cover term while our examples have all been confined to lexical restrictions. It must now be stressed that the distinction between e-range and p-range applies equally to selection restrictions. Just as a lexical restriction can be given either as an e-statement or as a p-statement, so a selection restriction can take either form, depending on similar considerations to those which we have seen to operate in the case of lexical restrictions. There is, however, a further motivation for adopting a p-statement in the case of selection restrictions. This is to safeguard a useful generalization against individual counter examples which would otherwise falsify it. To complement the p-statement, such individual counter examples may then be covered by a lexical restriction to the effect that outside the scope (of the p-statement) of the selection restriction these constitute the only (e-range) or normal (p-range) environments in which the sense in question can be used.

To illustrate these points, we now turn to a brief examination of the collocational properties of 'abundant (in)' with reference

to its distributional relation with 'rich (in)'. We may start with the observation that 'abundant (in)' and 'rich (in)' are synonymous in any sentence provided that they are interchangeable in that sentence. Thus the question of synonymy reduces itself in the case of these two items to the question of interchangeability. Now it seems beyond reasonable doubt that 'abundant' and 'rich' are interchangeable in

(9.62) The country is rich/abundant in minerals.

(9.63) The area is rich/abundant in coal.

(9.64) The Middle East is rich/abundant in oil.

It is highly doubtful, however, that 'abundant' is acceptable in

(9.65) He is rich/?abundant in experience.

(9.66) The art gallery is rich/?abundant in paintings.

(9.67) Meat is rich/?abundant in protein.

On the basis of these two limited sets of data, we may advance two hypotheses concerning the collocational properties of 'abundant'. First, on what can occur in the subject position there is the selection restriction that it contain the concept (Geographical area). Secondly, what is permissible in the complement position is subject to the selection restriction that it contain the concept (Natural resources). Since a geographical area can possess things other than natural resources whereas natural resources must be located in a geographical area, the second selection restriction appears to determine the first. Of neither selection restriction are there any overt indications to be found in dictionaries (at least, in those that I have consulted). As regards the second selection restriction, on the other hand, strong covert indications are available in the shape of examples which confirm our second hypothesis. However, we shall be proved wrong if we turn these hypotheses into e-statements of selection restrictions. For 'abundant' seems to be perfectly acceptable in, say

(9.68) The dictionary is rich/abundant in quotations.

Now if 'abundant' is indeed acceptable in (9.68) (and let us assume that it is), then (9.68) will constitute a counter instance against both of our hypotheses. However, even assuming this to be the case, we need not abandon these hypotheses, and should not do so if there are enough confirming instances (such as (9.62) to (9.64)) to make them useful as generalizations. To retain them without doing violence to actual usage, all we have to do is to assign to them

the status of p-statements. Provided this is done, the one or more counter examples can then be accommodated in a complementary lexical restriction, and/or a complementary selection restriction if and where generalization is possible.

Just as e-statements are sometimes warranted in the case of lexical restrictions, so they may equally be warranted in the case of selection restrictions. In this regard, 'handsome', which we have already discussed in relation to 'generous', may serve as an example. Another example is 'pass away', concerning which McIntosh (1961) has drawn our attention to the fact that unlike 'die' it is not applicable to plants. Thus knowledge of its collocational properties "forbids me to say (except in some kind of whimsical register) 'The rhododendron passed away'" (1961a: 335). It is necessary, however, to narrow down the collocational range of 'pass away' still further, for in addition to plants it is inapplicable to many other things, including animals (but excluding pets), to which 'die' is perfectly applicable. In fact, 'pass away' is normally predicated only of persons. We may thus attach to 'pass away' an e-statement to the effect that what occurs in the subject position must contain the concept (Person). I have used (Person) rather than (Human) because it seems perfectly acceptable to apply 'pass away' to animals when, as pets, they are given the sentimental status of persons (cf. Quirk et al, 1972: 187).

By way of underlining the frequent need for p-statements, we will now examine part of a lexical field where p-statements are required for both selection and lexical restrictions. In the process of this examination we shall deliberately rely as much as possible on information extracted or inferred from dictionaries. The senses in question are 'mighty', 'precious' and 'rattling', all of which mean "very" but each of which can replace 'very' only in a limited range of environments.

As far as 'mighty' is concerned, where dictionaries gloss the relevant sense as "very" they give no indication as to its collocational properties. It would be wrong, however, to assume that 'mighty' has the same collocational range as 'very'. Apart from the obvious situational restrictions (i.e. 'mighty' is somewhat informal and is more prevalent in American English), there seem to be identifiable collocational restrictions at work as well, and

it is these that concern us. As far as collocational restrictions are concerned, the examples supplied by dictionaries to illustrate the use of 'mighty' all point clearly in one direction. This is manifest in the following sentences, where all the 'mighty + adjective' combinations are taken from various dictionaries, in which no other combinations are given:

(9.69) I'm very/mighty pleased.

(9.70) He's very/mighty clever.

(9.71) It was a very/mighty good meal.

In these examples it is not difficult to detect a concept (or semantic property) that is shared by all the adjectives. If for all these adjectives we bring to mind their antonyms, i.e. 'displeased', 'stupid' and 'bad' respectively, it is easy to see a sense in which the former are the semantically positive members of each pair. The presence of (Positive) in the adjectives in these examples does not seem to be a mere coincidence, for 'mighty' will become somewhat less natural or normal in (9.69) to (9.71) if the adjectives are replaced by their corresponding negative terms. That 'mighty' tends to occur with semantically positive adjectives is not entirely arbitrary, in view of what may be regarded as its reflected meaning emanating from its more salient, semantically positive senses. In the light of these considerations, it will obviously be desirable to capture the facts in question by means of a selection restriction. But to the extent that adjectives lacking (Positive) are not ruled out in any hard and fast manner, or may even be perfectly acceptable (for some speakers) as in

(9.72) He was very/mighty tired (CED).

the selection restriction will be warranted only if it is given as a p-statement.

Of the collocational properties of 'precious' no overt indications are to be found in dictionaries, either. But here again the examples found in them converge in such a way that one is left in little doubt as to the likely p-range of 'precious'. Thus, with few exceptions, we find 'precious' in the environment of '_____ little', as in

(9.73) I have very/precious little money left.

(9.74) She spends very/precious little time working.

(9.75) (He understood) very/precious little of it.

To these examples we may now add the following observations. First, 'precious' will remain acceptable in (9.73) to (9.75) no matter what changes are made in these sentences provided that 'little' is retained and that 'very' is acceptable in the altered sentences. There is thus reason to abstract 'little' from (9.73) to (9.75) as alone relevant in stating the collocational range of 'precious'. Secondly, 'precious' can serve as a modifier for other items similar in meaning to 'little', as in

(9.76) He has very/precious few friends.

(9.77) He earns a very/precious small income.

Thirdly, 'precious' will become downright unacceptable in (9.73) to (9.75) if 'little' is replaced by its antonym 'much', while 'very' will clearly remain acceptable. Here again, a generalization is possible: as countless other examples will testify, the unacceptability of 'precious' as a modifier of 'much' applies regardless of the surrounding environment. Fourthly, in addition to 'much', if one picks an adjective at random, say, 'tall' or 'interesting', the chances are that it will turn out not to be modifiable by 'precious'. Thus:

(9.78) He is very/*precious tall.

(9.79) It is very/*precious interesting.

In the light of these four observations we may form the hypothesis that 'precious' is subject to the selection restriction (Small in amount or number). As in the case of the selection restriction for 'mighty', this selection restriction has a ready explanation in what may be regarded as the reflected meaning of 'precious'. Taken as an e-statement, however, this selection restriction will not be entirely warranted, for insofar as the dictionary in question is right 'precious' is perfectly acceptable in

(9.80) (He) took very/precious good care of that (NECD).

But this isolated counter example does not mean that we have to abandon the hypothesized selection restriction. To accommodate this counter example and possibly a few others, all we have to do is to cast the selection restriction in the form of a p-statement. Now there is yet another fact to be taken into account, namely, that although 'small' is within the p-range of 'precious' it occurs somewhat less commonly or naturally with 'precious' than do 'little' and 'few'. To incorporate this fact into our specification

of the collocational properties of 'precious', we may adopt a p-statement to the effect that within the preferred selectional range of 'precious' 'little' and 'few' constitute its preferred lexical range.

If 'mighty' and 'precious', in their different ways, are restricted in their collocational range as compared with 'very', 'rattling' is even more so. As evidence for this we find unmistakable covert indications in various dictionaries, from which the following 'rattling + adjective + headword' combinations are taken:

(9.81) It is a very/rattling good lunch.

(9.82) It is a very/rattling good speech.

(9.83) It is a very/rattling good horse.

In addition, some dictionaries also provide overt indications. Thus, in The Concise Oxford Dictionary we find "(good, etc.)" and in CED we find "(intensifier qualifying something good, fine, pleasant, etc.)". These overt indications are somewhat misleading, however, in that they seem to encourage the hypothesis that 'rattling' is subject to the selection restriction (Good). Quite apart from restrictions on what can occur in the headword position, this hypothesis can be easily proved false with regard to the adjective position alone. Thus 'rattling', but not 'very', will become unacceptable or at least odd in (9.81) to (9.83) if 'good' is replaced by, say, 'fine' or 'nice' or 'pleasant', senses all of which clearly satisfy the hypothesized selection restriction. In fact, 'good' appears to be the only item normally modifiable by 'rattling' - subject, of course, also to restrictions concerning the headword position as well as to situational restrictions. If so, 'good' must be construed as an expression rather than a concept, and the hypothesized selection restriction must accordingly be replaced by a lexical restriction. The latter is to be cast in the form of an e-statement or a p-statement, depending on how categorically items like 'fine' and 'nice' are ruled out.

CHAPTER 10

ACCOUNTING FOR THE COMMUNIS BETWEEN OTHERWISE NON-SYNONYMOUS SENSES

10.1. The need for both sense and occurrence

In the present chapter we turn our attention to the second type of occurrence-synonym, which, as we saw in Chapter 8, consists of cases where two senses normally not synonymous happen to be synonymous in one or more sentences/contexts as a result of accidental factors in the sentences/contexts in question. With regard to this type, which we may appropriately call 'pure occurrence-synonyms', we have judged it more natural, and often more economical, to account for the communis, since here it is the communis rather than the propria that is somewhat unexpected and thus calls for explanation. It is our concern in what follows to sketch the lines along which such explanation might be provided. Our task, to put it in clear contrast with the last and complementary chapter, is to account for the communis between otherwise non-synonymous senses.

Given a conception of synonymy flexible enough to accommodate occurrence-synonymy, it may be regarded as an empirical fact that an extremely large number of forms behave irregularly as regards synonymy, i.e. A and B may be synonymous in certain sentences/contexts, but not synonymous in others, either being interchangeable but failing to preserve the meaning of the sentence in question, or not even being interchangeable. This fact, in my view, requires careful explanation in a comprehensive treatment of synonymy. It may be accounted for, in the first instance and somewhat trivially, by recognizing homonymy. Such is clearly the explanation required for the fact that while 'illuminate' can replace 'light' in (10.1) without changing the meaning of the sentence, it cannot do so in (10.2):

(10.1) The hall is lit by five chandeliers.

(10.2) He lighted upon a rare book in a secondhand bookshop. Failing such an explanation, we may then try and invoke polysemy. The fact that 'ill' can replace 'sick' in (10.3) without changing the meaning, or rather one of the meanings, of the sentence but

cannot do so in (10.4) is susceptible of such an explanation:

(10.3) He is sick but refuses to take any medicine.

(10.4) He is sick of travel.

These are somewhat trivial explanations, which I have mentioned partly as background and partly for the sake of completeness. Much more important for our present concern is the fact that there are many cases with regard to which neither homonymy nor polysemy is of any avail. Consider the following situation concerning 'improve' and 'increase'. To begin with, one can say (10.5) but not (10.6):

(10.5) The budget has increased the burden of taxation.

(10.6) *The budget has improved the burden of taxation.

Conversely, one can say (10.7) but not (10.8):

(10.7) Working conditions have been improved.

(10.8) *Working conditions have been increased.

However, one can say both (10.9) and (10.10) and under normal circumstances the two sentences would mean the same:

(10.9) The book has improved my understanding of the subject.

(10.10) The book has increased my understanding of the subject.

With such instances of irregular behaviour as are exemplified by 'improve' and 'increase', a conception of synonymy allowing only sense-synonymy (or lexeme-synonymy) faces serious problems as regards their explanation. Now, in order to be consistent and responsible in handling instances of synonymy, each time we recognize sense-synonymy between two terms we have to postulate a distinct sense which they share and which is to be entered in the lexicon if it is not already there. This puts us in a dilemma in the case of such instances as 'improve' and 'increase'. On the one hand, in attributing sense-synonymy to them, we will have tacitly adopted a procedure which is liable not only to cause excessive polysemy in the lexicon but also to run counter to incontrovertible intuitions as regards polysemy. More importantly, quite apart from the undesirability of excessive polysemy and of incompatibility with intuitions, such a procedure is of no explanatory value whatsoever. For by recognizing sense-synonymy every time we encounter occurrence-synonymy we are left unable to offer any explanation as to why it is that terms behave irregularly the way they do. It is clear that this procedure would effectively collapse the level of sense and the level of occurrence into one

and, in so doing, would throw no light on the facts in question. On the other hand, if for the sake of avoiding excessive polysemy and conforming to intuitions we decide instead not to set up a distinct sense shared by 'improve' and 'increase', then we cannot attribute synonymy to the two terms without being guilty of inconsistency. Thus we will be forced to reject their synonymy in the environment of 'understanding', which in turn means that they do not behave irregularly as regards synonymy after all. It then follows that the question of explaining their irregular behaviour as regards synonymy cannot be legitimately posed.

If we now retreat, as it were, to the level of occurrence, it will be perfectly in order to treat 'improve' and 'increase' as occurrence-synonymous in the environment of 'understanding'. But we are in no better a position to explain their irregular behaviour. In fact, the relevant question can no more legitimately arise on the level of occurrence alone than on the level of sense alone. The reason is simple: no units larger than occurrences (i.e. senses) are recognized which can then be seen as behaving irregularly on the level of occurrence, being synonymous in some sentences/contexts but not so in others.

There is thus no single level of meaning - be it sense-meaning or occurrence-meaning - on which an explanatory framework can be built to account for the irregular behaviour of senses as regards synonymy. This suggests that what we need is an approach which operates simultaneously on the level of sense and on the level of occurrence.

10.2. Potential meaning and actual meaning: a simple rationale

The approach I will now propose is based on the distinction between potential meaning and actual meaning.

A distinction in these terms was first drawn by McIntosh. The following is his definition of 'potential meaning':

By potential meaning I mean something that can perhaps best be described negatively. Let us consider it, to begin with, in reference to what I have called linguistic (that is ordinary) meaning. Let us think of any word, say the word cat. Now there are many things which the word cat cannot mean, and another way of saying this is

that it is only appropriate in certain places in a piece of English text and only appropriate even there in certain situational contexts. In one way or another it cannot, if it is to fulfil these conditions, substitute for elephant or grapheme or (though for different reasons) tomorrow or big. We can therefore say that it has only a certain range of eligibility, just as these other words have theirs. So for one reason or another, cat is a form which is only occasionally appropriate, and in the very large number of cases where it is not, some other form or forms must be used.

The potential meaning of cat is then that which is conventionally invested in it as against all other forms in the language; this, as I have suggested, may be described if not defined as its restricted appropriacy to certain places in a text in certain situational contexts (1961b: 113).

'Actual meaning' is defined as follows:

By my use of the term "actual" I intend nothing subtle. Instance by instance, in the various allowed places in a text in the appropriate situational contexts, a form (for example cat) would appear to be capable of a variety of differing meanings, perhaps in the last resort as many such as there are instances. ... Because the meaning appropriate to a given instance is specifically associated with this actual living manifestation of a form in its context, I apply the term "actual meaning" to such cases.

The actual meaning depends on the actual context, taking this latter term in as wide a sense as circumstances may render necessary (1961b: 113-4).

Between potential meaning and actual meaning McIntosh identifies an intermediate level when he says that "where we wish to speak explicitly of a cluster of instances, we may speak of this as a 'use'" (1961b: 114).

In this way three levels of meaning are postulated, though the intermediate level is given less importance. How, then, do these relate to the three levels of meaning that we have identified, namely, lexeme-meaning, sense-meaning and occurrence-meaning. Potential meaning, it seems, corresponds to lexeme-meaning. As far as the rest are concerned, there is no one-to-one correspondence. McIntosh's level of use seems to conflate what we have distinguished as sense-meaning and occurrence-meaning, once it is recalled that occurrences, as we conceive them, are not unique events but consist of such unique events as are considered identical from the relevant point of view. It may appear at first sight that McIntosh's level of actual meaning corresponds to our level of occurrence-meaning, but this is in fact not the case, since, as can be inferred from

"... as many such as there are instances", actual meaning is conceived by McIntosh as attaching to unique events.

In view of these differences, I will, for the purpose of this chapter, take over the terms 'potential meaning' and 'actual meaning' - as well as the general motivation behind them - without adhering to the definitions that have been given to them by McIntosh. Instead, I will equate potential meaning with sense-meaning, and actual meaning with occurrence-meaning. Given this straightforward equation, it may seem superfluous to introduce the terms 'potential meaning' and 'actual meaning'. This is not so, because 'potential meaning' and 'actual meaning' capture the spirit of the approach I am about to present more aptly than their corresponding terms.

Now the explanatory value of the distinction between potential meaning and actual meaning lies in the following statement: Potential meaning is not the sole determinant of actual meaning, which is rather the function of potential meaning and sentence/context. It is not difficult to see how a general rationale of the communis between otherwise non-synonymous senses can be derived from this statement. Given that A^S and B^S differ on the level of potential meaning, it is nevertheless possible for this difference to be neutralized in certain sentences/contexts in such a way that the occurrences assignable to them become synonymous on the level of actual meaning. Where the necessary neutralization has taken place, this gives rise to occurrence-synonymy. Otherwise all or part of the difference on the level of potential meaning is carried over onto the level of actual meaning, whereby occurrence-synonymy is prevented and A^S and B^S appear, as it were, in their true colours. Hence the irregular behaviour of A^S and B^S as regards synonymy (cf. Lyons, 1968: 452; Suokko, 1972: 26-7; Nida, 1975: 99-101).

10.3. Potential meaning and actual meaning: practical analyses

The rationale that has just been presented is a very simple one, about which no more needs to be said on the theoretical plane. It only remains to see how it works in practice. Let us turn, therefore, to the analysis of specific examples.

(1) 'Improve'/'increase'

As we have already devoted some discussion to 'improve' and 'increase', I will take them as my first example and look at them in greater detail. For ease of exposition I will confine myself to the transitive uses of these two verbs, but the essence of what I have to say will apply to the intransitive uses as well.

Now it is almost superfluous to say that between 'improve' and 'increase' there is a sharp semantic difference which prevents them from functioning synonymously in many sentences/contexts. Thus, as we saw earlier:

(10.11) The book has improved/increased my understanding of the subject.

(10.12) Working conditions have been improved/*increased.

(10.13) The budget has increased/*improved the burden of taxation.

An explanation for the communis and, less importantly, the propria in the above sentences can be found in two obvious, related points of difference between the two senses. In the first place, 'improve' and 'increase' differ in the kind of items that are semantically acceptable as their objects. 'Improve' requires of its object that it should be capable of being appropriately construed in terms of "quality". In the case of 'increase', on the other hand, what occurs as object must be capable of being appropriately construed in terms of "quantity" (or "amount"). The second point of difference concerns the nature of the change that is expressed: while to 'improve' is to "make better (in quality)", to 'increase' is to "make greater (in quantity)". It is thus obvious that semantically 'improve' and 'increase' do not entail each other. Now the same is true as a matter of 'knowledge of the world' or communication in situations. For one can make something better without adding to its quantity, and conversely one can add to the quantity of something without making it better.

However, there are situations in which the changes that are being referred to converge in such a way that to make something better in quality is to make it greater in quantity and vice versa. What happens in the case of 'understanding' in (10.11) represents just such a situation. In the first place, 'understanding' is susceptible of both a qualitative and a quantitative interpretation. This explains why 'understanding' can serve as the object of both

'improve' and 'increase'. Moreover, to better the quality of one's understanding is normally taken to be the same as to add to its quantity, or at least one way of improving one's understanding is by increasing it. This explains why, by the standard of everyday communication (particularly given our conception of synonymy in terms of pragmatic equivalence), 'improve' and 'increase' are normally synonymous in the environment of 'understanding'.

While knowledge of communication in situations can lead us to perceive occurrence-synonymy between 'improve' and 'increase', we also know by virtue of our experience of communication in situations that an increase need not always produce a change for the better. Instead, judgement will depend on what it is that has been increased and on the standpoints adopted. While by increasing one's understanding one will normally be deemed to have made it better, by increasing the burden of taxation one will normally be deemed to have made it worse. Hence the inability of 'improve' to replace 'increase' in (10.13) without changing the meaning of the sentence. What makes 'improve' anomalous in this sentence is that one does not normally think of the burden of taxation in terms of a qualitative scale ranging from 'good' to 'bad'. Even if, despite its normal incompatibility with a qualitative interpretation in terms of a good-bad scale, the burden of taxation can be said in casual conversation to be improved, as in, say 'My tax burden has been improved', the improvement can only be taken to mean a reduction.

The situation is just the opposite with 'working conditions', which is unacceptable in (10.12). Since, as a matter of normal usage (as opposed to abstract semantic reasoning), 'working conditions' is not open to a quantitative interpretation in terms of numbers, 'Working conditions have been increased' sounds very odd in actual communication, although it makes perfect sense in terms of abstract semantic reasoning.

(2) 'Disappear'/'fade'

As with 'improve' and 'increase', there is an obvious semantic difference between 'disappear' and 'fade', which, when the two senses occur in a simple tense or in the perfective aspect, is transferred without loss onto the level of actual meaning. As a result, (10.14), for example, differs semantically in an important way from (10.15):

(10.14) Interest in the book has disappeared.

(10.15) Interest in the book has faded.

However, we find this semantic difference neutralized or at least significantly reduced when the two senses occur in the progressive aspect, in in (10.16) and (10.17):

(10.16) Interest in the book is disappearing.

(10.17) Interest in the book is fading.

The explanation for this lies, it seems to me, in the interaction between the potential meaning of 'disappear' and the progressive aspect. To start with, we may draw attention to an important difference between 'disappear' and 'fade' in terms of the distinction between 'telic' and 'atelic' (cf. Comrie, 1976: 44-8; cf. also Lyons, 1977: 711-2 for the identical distinction between accomplishment and non-accomplishment verbs). 'Disappear' is a telic verb denoting a process which reaches its natural completion with the event of disappearing - the event in question also denotable by the same verb. 'Fade', on the other hand, is an atelic verb, in that it denotes a process without an inherent terminal point. In somewhat more semantic terms, 'disappear' denotes the process (or event) of something going out of existence, while 'fade' denotes the process of something coming, as it were, into a weaker form of existence.

Now in (10.14) the perfective aspect indicates that the process is already complete, with the implication that there is no longer any interest in the book. The sentence in question thus differs from (10.15), which has the different implication that there is still some interest in the book. Once the progressive aspect is used, however, as in (10.16), it will have the effect of indicating that the process denoted by 'disappear' is not complete. If so, then, unlike (10.14), (10.16) will carry the implication that there is still some interest in the book. But then so does (10.17). In this way the difference between 'disappear' and 'fade' is largely neutralized by the presence of the progressive aspect, with the result that the two senses are synonymous in this sentential frame - at least much closer in meaning than when a simple tense or the perfective aspect is used. It may be noted in passing that the same point applies, for analogous reasons, when 'disappear' and 'fade' are preceded by 'begin' or 'start, as in

(10.18) Interest in the book has begun to disappear.

(10.19) Interest in the book has begun to fade.

(3) 'Range'/'selection'

Here we are concerned to explain (a) and, less importantly, (b) against the background of (c) and (d):

(a) 'Range' and 'selection' are synonymous in

(10.20) We have a wide range/selection of flowers.

(10.21) What a nice range/selection of flowers.

(10.22) The shop has a good range/selection of hats.

(b) However, 'range' is somewhat more natural in (10.20), while 'selection' is somewhat more natural in (10.21) and (10.22).

(c) Only 'range' is acceptable in

(10.23) The range/*selection of issues discussed in this book is enormous.

(10.24) He has collected a wide range/*selection of stamps.

(10.25) The two heads of state exchanged views on a wide range/*selection of topics.

(10.26) The factory produces a wide range/*selection of cars.

(10.27) The engineer has invented a wide range/*selection of machines.

(d) Only 'selection' is acceptable in

(10.28) His selection/*range of authors shows good taste.

(10.29) A new selection/*range of poetry was published yesterday.

Now the relevant sense of 'range', from SOED (p.1745, II, 6), is "the limits between which a thing may vary in amount or degree b. a series or scale (of sounds, temperatures, prices, etc.) extending between certain limits". The relevant sense of 'selection', also from SOED (1932, 2), is "a particular choice; choice of a particular individual or individuals; concr. a number of selected things". All the occurrences of 'range' and 'selection' in the above, it seems, are assignable to these two senses respectively. So if we treat these senses as individual wholes, there will be no hope of accounting for the facts in terms of polysemy. However, it is possible to break down these senses, each roughly into two. Of these four resultant senses, two correspond roughly to the portions that I have underlined in the respective definitions of 'range' and 'selection'. These two senses have in common the fact that both function as collective terms for countable entities, in a manner similar to, say, 'number' in 'a number of'. Like 'number', they tend not to be used as headwords but as parts of modifiers. Thus,

when they occur in subject position, they usually require plural verbs for concord, as in

(10.30) A wide range/selection of flowers are on display.

A further characteristic of these senses is that they are preceded by the indefinite article. It is only when these two senses are in question that 'range' and 'selection' are sometimes interchangeable.

The occurrence of 'range' in (10.23) and the occurrence of 'selection' in (10.28) and (10.29) are clearly not assignable to these two (narrowed-down) senses respectively. This will explain, in terms of polysemy, why 'range' and 'selection' are not interchangeable in these sentences.

From this point on we will concentrate on this pair of 'collective' senses and explain their behaviour in the remaining sentences.

As a first step it is necessary to identify the difference in potential meaning between 'range' and 'selection'. The crucial difference seems to be that where the concept of "variety" is prominent in the meaning of 'range', the concept of "choice" is present or implicit in the meaning of 'selection'.

It should equally be noted that the concept of "variety" is somewhat more prominent in the potential meaning of 'range' than the concept of "choice" is in the potential meaning of 'selection'. This will help to explain the asymmetry whereby 'range' is more capable of replacing 'selection' than the other way round, as it will become clear presently.

Now in most sentences/contexts where 'selection' is used (in the relevant sense) it can be replaced by 'range': whether some change of meaning results from such replacement is a matter that we will look into later. The reason for this seems to be that in these sentences/contexts the concept of "choice", though it may be present or implicit in the meaning of 'selection', is not of such importance as to make 'range', which does not include the concept of "choice" as part of its potential meaning, an unacceptable replacement for 'selection'.

While 'range' is usually capable of replacing 'selection', it is not the case the other way round, as is evident from (10.24) to (10.27). In (10.24) and (10.25) what makes 'selection' unacceptable, or at least awkward, appears to be the fact that, although the concept of "choice" is not incompatible with those sentences/

contexts in terms of abstract reasoning, what is normally relevant and significant in those sentences/contexts as a matter of actual linguistic practice is not the concept of "choice" but that of "variety". Hence the resultant anomaly or awkwardness when 'selection' is used in place of 'range'. A different factor is at work in (10.26) and (10.27), namely, that the cars and machines in question are not in existence until they are produced or invented. This fact is incompatible with the concept of "choice", for the act of choosing normally presupposes the existence of the relevant entities from which a choice is made. To bring out this point more clearly, we may note that 'selection' is perfectly acceptable in

(10.31) The garage buys a wide range/selection of cars.

(10.32) The engineer has ordered a wide range/selection of machines.

sentences which differ from (10.26) and (10.27) respectively only by containing verbs which imply the existence of the relevant entities.

The difference between 'range' and 'selection' in terms of "variety" versus "choice" will also help to explain why 'range' is more natural in (10.20) while 'selection' is more natural in (10.21) and (10.22). The crucial words in this regard are 'wide' on the one hand and 'nice' and 'good' on the other. 'Range' combines more naturally with 'wide' than does 'selection' because - I take this as fairly obvious - 'wide' is semantically more naturally associated with the concept of "variety" than with that of "choice". I take it as equally obvious, on the other hand, that 'nice' and 'good' are semantically more naturally associated with the concept of "choice" than with that of "variety", so that 'selection' is more natural than 'range' when used in combination with 'nice' or 'good'.

If it is the difference of "variety" versus "choice" that accounts for the facts to which it has so far been applied, is not this difference also present in (10.20) to (10.22), where 'range' and 'selection' are interchangeable? The first part of the answer is that this difference is largely neutralized in these sentences. It is largely neutralized, in the first place, by the linguistic context. Thus the presence of 'wide' in (10.20) plays down, as it were, the concept of "choice" in the potential meaning of 'selection' and invests 'selection' with the actual meaning of "variety", while the presence of 'nice' and 'good' in (10.21) and (10.22)

plays down, as it were, the concept of "variety" in the potential meaning of 'range' and invests 'range' with the actual meaning of "choice". In the second place, it is possible for the difference in potential meaning between 'range' and 'selection' to be neutralized in a particular situational context by the fact that in that situational context it is not relevant. What is important, it seems, is whether 'range' and 'selection' are interchangeable in a particular sentence/context. For when they are interchangeable, they also tend to be synonymous by the standard of everyday communication.

However, this is only the first part of the answer. The second part is that although this difference in potential meaning tends to be neutralized in the environment of 'a wide _____ of' and 'a good/nice _____ of', it can nevertheless come into operation in these environments, with the result, for example, that in (10.33) only 'range' is appropriate, and that in (10.34) 'selection' is far more fitting than 'range':

(10.33) It is true that we have a wide _____ of flowers, but I'm afraid they are not terribly good, because we arrived late at the flower sale and had to buy what was left.

(10.34) There are so many different kinds of flowers to choose from that it is difficult to decide what to put on display, but with the help of experts a nice _____ of flowers are put on view for the public every year.

(4) 'Cold'/'hard'

There is an obvious difference in meaning between 'cold' and 'hard', such that in most sentences/contexts the two senses cannot be used synonymously. Thus while 'a cold shower' is a perfectly acceptable expression, 'a hard shower' clearly is not. Conversely, one can normally say 'hard punishment' but not 'cold punishment'. In the environment of 'winter', however, as in 'a cold winter' and 'a hard winter', the two senses are not only interchangeable but are normally taken to convey (roughly) the same meaning (cf. Suokko, 1972: 26-7).

To account for this communis and, less importantly, the propria, we may begin by spelling out the relevant potential meaning of 'hard', which, to adopt the definition in SOED, is "difficult to endure". Now it is characteristic of 'hard' with this potential meaning that when it is used to modify a particular expression it

acquires as an additional actual meaning the property or properties which make the referent of that expression difficult to endure. Quite naturally, the additional actual meaning normally acquired by 'hard' when used to modify 'winter' is "cold", since this property is what typically makes winters difficult to endure. Despite this additional actual meaning, however, 'a hard winter' can still differ from 'a cold winter' in three ways. First, in the environment of 'winter' 'hard' can acquire further actual meanings over and above "cold", as coldness is not the only property that can make winters difficult to endure. Secondly, even if no such further actual meanings are acquired, 'hard' still carries, now on the level of actual meaning, its potential meaning of "difficult to endure" - a meaning which is not entailed by "cold", since it is possible (in theory if not as a matter of normal linguistic practice) for a winter to be cold but not difficult to endure. Thirdly, as one sense of a polysemous lexeme, 'hard' ("difficult to endure") carries the potential reflected meaning "solid and difficult to break". This potential reflected meaning is naturally activated when 'hard' is used to modify 'winter', since when coldness makes a winter difficult to endure it will also cause the ground to become solid and difficult to break.

Of these differences, the third is not a matter of cognitive meaning and therefore will not have the effect of preventing 'hard' and 'cold' from being synonymous. The other two differences can, of course, have this effect. However, they can also be neutralized or largely neutralized by context, as when coldness does make a winter difficult to endure and is the only property that does so. In such contexts, it seems reasonable to treat 'hard' and 'cold' as occurrence-synonymous.

While 'hard' typically has "cold" as part of its actual meaning in the environment of 'winter', "cold" need not be present in its actual meaning in other environments. 'Hard punishment' is an example of just such an environment, where "cold" does not normally become an actual meaning of 'hard'. As is to be expected, therefore, 'cold punishment' is anomalous.

We said earlier that the relevant potential meaning of 'hard' is "difficult to endure". Now the suitability of 'hard' for modifying an expression depends on whether this potential meaning is

applicable to that expression as a matter of normal cultural and linguistic practice. This will explain why 'hard' is unacceptable as a substitute for 'cold' in 'cold shower'. Now it is of course possible, in terms of abstract reasoning, for a shower to be difficult to endure, but in terms of normal cultural and linguistic practice this is not a property that one normally associates with showers. Hence the anomaly of 'hard' in this environment.

10.4. In defence of potential meaning and actual meaning

Behind the present approach is the belief that both potential meaning and actual meaning should have an important place in a semantic theory, and in particular in an account of synonymy. Thus, instead of subscribing totally either to the autonomist view of lexical meaning or to the contextualist view, we believe that each side represents half, but only half, the truth. With one side we share the view that there is an autonomous level of lexical meaning. With the other side we go part of the way in sharing the view that meaning derives from context.

In so doing, of course, we face objections from both directions, so that we are put in a position of having to defend and criticize each view at the same time. To overcome these objections, I will try to show that, instead of being totally right or wrong, each side is partially right and that only by combining some of the views on both sides can we arrive at a conception of meaning which is wholly tenable and does justice to the realities of linguistic communication.

It will be recalled that one of our arguments in favour of treating occurrence-synonymy as a legitimate level of synonymy is that occurrence-meaning (i.e. actual meaning) is a legitimate level of meaning (cf. 3.4). What follows is also intended to serve as a vindication of that argument.

Let us begin with three representative statements of the contextualist view of meaning:

- (1) To the question: What is the meaning of (say) house? we shall answer: It is its distinctive occurrence in certain linguistic frames, or (as I would prefer to say) in certain sentential functions such as (using x, y, z, etc. to

mark positions): This x is big, I wish to buy a y, John's z, etc. House may be substituted in x, y, z, etc.; that is its meaning (Haas (quoted by Waldron, 1979: 208)).

- (2) The meanings which each minimal entity can be said to bear must be understood as being a purely contextual meaning. None of the minimal entities, nor the roots, have such an "independent" existence that they can be assigned a lexical meaning. ... In absolute isolation no sign has any meaning; any sign-meaning arises in a context (Hjelmslev, 1953: 44-5).
- (3) I consider that the theory of meaning will be more solidly based if the meaning of a given linguistic unit is defined to be the set of paradigmatic relations that the unit in question contracts with other units of the language (in the context or contexts in which it occurs), without any attempt being made to set up 'contents' for these units (Lyons, 1963: 59).

In my view, all these statements of the contextualist view of meaning are open to the objections raised in the following quotations by scholars who hold the autonomist view of meaning:

- (4) Is meaning independent of the context or not? In order to answer this question we might revert to what we have said in section 2. above. It is said there that meaning is the rule for the use of a word or form. What does this mean? It means that words are used according to their meaning, they are employed with a view to their meaning. Words fall into their places in our speech not at random or by accident, but on the basis of their meaning. Now we have the clue to our question. If words are used according to their meaning, then meaning comes before use, in the same way as the use of a language presupposes the knowledge of that language.

If, then, meaning comes before the actual use of the word, it is not the context that decides its meaning, but the meaning, on the basis of which the word in question is "set" in the various contexts.

What would be the consequence if meaning did not precede actual use, if it were not independent of the incidental context? First of all we should be deprived of the rule with the help of which we can use the morphemes. It stands to reason that if the meaning of a morpheme was not known until it was put in a context, we should have no way of getting at its meaning, and, what logically follows from it, we could not use it. Furthermore, as the number of possible contexts is unlimited every morpheme would have infinitely numerous "meanings", and thus language would disintegrate into chaos instead of falling into a well-organized system (Antal, 1961: 217-8).

- (5) Sometimes to the general question 'why is it that a kind of expression possesses the properties it does possess?' it is answered: 'This is how we have learnt to use these expressions, terms, etc.' This answer implies that the peculiar characteristics of terms like 'good' or 'pretty' or the inherent incorrigibility of 'I am in pain' is due to

the fact that we have learnt to use these terms or expressions just in this way (p.424). This is clearly a case of putting the cart before the horse. In order to learn the use of these expressions correctly, they must already have a correct use. And if, further, we hold that their use is their meaning, then it follows that they must already have their specific meaning. Consequently, their meaning cannot be derived from or explained by referring to our learning the language (p.426). My argument is meant to apply to any view which denies that it is possible to discuss meaning independently of use, or to any view which holds that use necessarily determines meaning (p.424). (Weiler, 1967).

- (6) It has been maintained by Ryle and others that words have sense in an only derivative manner, that they are abstractions rather than extractions from sentence-sense. There is something we must acknowledge and something we must reject in this doctrine. What we must concede is that when we specify the contribution of words we specify what they contribute as verbs or predicates or names or whatever, i.e. as sentence-parts, to a whole sentence-sense. Neither their status as this or that part of speech nor the very idea of words having sense can exist in isolation from the possibility of words' occurrence in sentences. But this is not yet to accept that words do not have sense as it were autonomously. And they must. If our entire understanding of word-sense were derived by abstraction from the senses of sentences and if (as is obviously the case) we could only get to know a finite number of sentence senses directly, there would be an infinite number of different ways of extrapolating to the sense of sentences whose meanings we have to work out. But we do in fact have an agreed way of working them out. This is because word-senses are autonomous items, for which we can write dictionary entries (Wiggins, 1971: 24-5).
- (7) The notion of use, as it ordinarily exists and is understood, presupposes the notion of meaning (in its central and paradigmatic sense), and ... it cannot therefore be used to elucidate the latter (Findlay, 1968: 118).

The objections voiced against the contextualist view of lexical meaning (or the view of meaning as 'use', which is essentially the same in the respect in question) boil down to two. First, the contextualist view of lexical meaning is incapable of explaining why words are not arbitrarily employed. Secondly, the contextualist view is incapable of accounting for the manner in which the meaning of sentences is arrived at through combining (in intricate ways) the meaning of their parts.

Neither of these objections, it seems to me, can be overcome, except by invoking something like the 'rules of use', as Miller does in the following:

When we use a word in a sentence (and I believe most psychologists and philosophers today agree that the sentence, not the word, is the primary unit of speech, that it in some sense comes "first") we choose our words according to the previous ways we have used them in other sentences. Instead of looking for word "meanings", then, we would do better to describe the conditions under which a word is USED (1966: 93-4).

But, strictly speaking, this is already going beyond the contextualist view of lexical meaning and postulating something over and above 'use' in a given context. As Bolinger points out:

But "meaning is from context" can signify two entirely different things. It can signify that a given unfamiliar word is identified by a given context, or that a given word is cumulatively identified by all the contexts in which it occurs. In the latter case, the word brings to the hearer or reader a reminder of all its previous contexts, and the present context then makes a selection on the basis of compatibility, with or without a certain amount of modification.

Understandably, the latter sense does not sort well with the principles of structuralism, for it implies that a word can accumulate meanings and carry them with it (1963: 133).

Thus what Miller postulates is to all intents and purposes autonomous lexical meaning. The only difference between "conditions under which a word is USED" and autonomous lexical meaning is an ontological and/or terminological rather than a substantive one. We must therefore conclude that, no matter what it is called or whether it is called 'meaning' at all, an autonomous level of lexical meaning must be postulated in order to explain facts of linguistic communication - a level of meaning, that is, other than that which directly results from 'use' or from meaning-relations which forms contract in contexts.

However, just as the contextualist view on its own is untenable, so the autonomist view, which finds expression in some of the quotations we have cited earlier, does not hold water on its own, either. In the first place, the autonomist view fails to give due recognition to certain facts of language use. As Hirsch says:

If we did not, in actual speech, constantly adjust our original meaning postulates, we could never speak or understand language with novelty, flexibility or precision. Language requires not only our intuition of a firm isolated meaning, but also our counter intuition that this meaning is only provisional (1976: 63).

In the second place, if meaning is treated by the autonomists as

preceding and determining use, it is only natural to confront them with the question as to where meaning comes from in the first place. This question can be interpreted in two ways - either as concerning the very first origins of Autonomous Meaning (a chicken-and-egg type problem), or as concerning the immediate source of current individual autonomous meanings - of which the latter is what I particularly have in mind. But whichever way the question is interpreted, it will be of no avail to say that it resides in dictionaries, for the question will then arise as to the source of dictionary definitions. There is, so far as I can see, no other way to answer the question than to conceive potential (i.e. autonomous) meaning as at least partially deriving from actual meaning (i.e. use), which was influenced by potential meaning, which was derived from actual meaning, and for practical purposes ad infinitum. Another way of giving the same answer is to conceive sense-meanings as being obtained through abstraction from occurrence-meanings. For these two reasons, we must conclude that a contextualist level of meaning must be postulated in order to explain certain facts of linguistic communication.

The upshot of our discussion, it will have become clear, is that to do full justice to the realities of linguistic communication we must assign a place to both potential meaning and actual meaning in a semantic theory (cf. Hirsch, 1976: 63). As it will have emerged from the present study, this applies particularly to synonymy (cf. Lyons, 1968: 452). On the one hand, in seeing potential meaning as deriving from actual meaning and subject to revision by context, we avoid such an unjustifiably cavalier attitude to actual meaning as is expressed in the statement that "what the context provides is not the meaning but the denotatum" (Antal, 1961: 219). An actual meaning of a term is distinct both from its potential meaning and, as 7.7 shows, from its denotatum or referent. On the other hand, in treating potential meaning as an important determinant of actual meaning, we avoid the equally unjustified cavalier attitude to potential meaning typified by the statement that "the so-called lexical meanings in certain signs are nothing but artificially isolated contextual meanings" (Hjelmslev, 1953: 45). However 'artificial' potential meaning may be, once it is abstracted and enshrined, as it were, in dictionaries, it cannot but help to

determine actual meaning. As Bolinger says:

Though many words lack referents easy to single out, and abstract their meanings from wide-ranging verbal contexts (...), once the abstraction has been made a limit is set on new contexts. The word is branded (1963: 134).

To appreciate this, one only needs to be reminded of the enormous influence that dictionaries have on our use of language, sometimes directly when we look up a word in a dictionary, sometimes indirectly when we learn the meaning of a word from someone else whose explanation or actual use of the word is in turn directly or indirectly influenced by dictionaries. Doroszewski writes:

The semantic content of a word and its uses in various contexts are inseparable things. To penetrate a word's semantic content is to become aware of its possible applications, usages, and is the prelude to transforming the potential content into actual uses. ...

The definitions of dictionary entries are documents of a pragmatic character from the field of semantics conceived of from a lexicological-lexicographical point of view: the aim of these definitions is to influence the behaviour of the people who are going to use the words defined in the dictionary (1973: 291-2).

If in addition to the postulation of these two levels of meaning we recognize, as we did earlier, that actual meaning is a function of potential meaning and sentence/context, we will have at our disposal a framework within which to account for the irregular behaviour of senses as regards synonymy. We have seen that on any single level of meaning synonymy is treated as an all-or-nothing matter, the units in question being either homogeneously synonymous or not synonymous at all. The question of explaining the heterogeneous behaviour of senses as regards synonymy is thus one which simply does not arise. The present approach clearly does not incur this consequence. By treating both potential and actual meaning as legitimate levels of meaning, this approach allows for the phenomenon that two senses may behave irregularly as regards synonymy and, in so doing, opens the way to its subsequent explanation. What form such explanation takes has been the concern of the last two sections.

CHAPTER 11

DIMENSIONS OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SYNONYMS

11.1. Introductory

The concern of the present chapter is to investigate the various dimensions of communicative relevance on which synonyms may be differentiated.

As suggested earlier, to speak of difference between synonyms need not involve a contradiction in terms as it may appear to do, provided one's conception of synonymy is not such as to insist on the unconditional total absence of difference as a necessary condition. For in view of what happens in everyday communication it is perfectly reasonable, and indeed useful, to fix an extent to which two words are to be regarded as synonymous but beyond which the same two words may then be seen to differ in one or more communicatively relevant ways. In Chapters 6 and 7 we fixed the extent; in the present chapter we will look beyond the extent in search of differences between what in the light of that extent we will have already identified as synonyms.

But do words which share (roughly) the same descriptive meaning have to differ in communicatively relevant ways? There is clearly no logical reason why they should (cf. Harris, 1973: 5-20; Lyons, 1963: 74-7). However, assuming language to be a fairly (though far from optimally) economical system, it will be advisable to assume that synonyms do differ in communicatively relevant respects. In practice, as we shall see later, it is almost always possible to find some communicatively relevant potential difference or other between any two given synonyms, although such a difference need not be actualized (i.e. be communicatively relevant in a particular context). In other words, once potential differences are taken into account, it will be correct to say that there are no 'absolute' synonyms.

Thus to the extent that those who deny the existence of synonyms in natural language deny in fact the existence of 'absolute' synonyms in the above sense, we are practically in agreement with them. There are, however, three important respects in which our position

differs from theirs.

In the first place, in their case prior criteria of synonymy are set up which insist on the total absence of difference as a necessary condition and which therefore no words in natural language can satisfy. This leads those holding the position to lose sight of the widespread empirical phenomenon of synonymy as it is manifested in everyday communication. Our position, on the other hand, consists of two stages: at the first stage criteria of synonymy are derived from observation of the corresponding empirical phenomenon, thereby necessarily permitting the existence of synonyms; and only at the second stage do we then proceed to try and discover differences between what have already emerged from the first stage as synonyms.

In the second place, those who deny the existence of synonyms fail to distinguish between differences that are potential and differences that are actual, and thus fail to recognize that the former do not entail the latter. In fact, their denial of the existence of synonyms is only tenable if potential, as opposed to actual, differences are adduced as grounds. The distinction between potential differences and actual differences and the accompanying recognition of their lack of co-extensiveness are both important features of our position.

In the third place, although we share with those denying the existence of synonyms an interest in the task of searching for differences between what we would regard as synonyms or between what they would regard as prima facie synonyms, we are engaged in the search with different aims and hence different consequences. Their aim is to ascertain whether synonyms exist, or, as it has often turned out in practice, to prove that synonyms do not exist. Thus, the search for differences is not pursued in its own right. And as a consequence, such scholars do not deem it necessary to conduct a comprehensive or detailed search. Our aim, on the other hand, is to discover as many as we can of the factors that may (though they need not) make a word preferable to its one or more synonyms. Thus the search is pursued in its own right. And as a consequence, what is needed is an account that is systematic, comprehensive and detailed. Such an account is what we will try and provide later in this chapter.

Having made the aim of our pursuit clear, we should perhaps make the nature of our pursuit more precise and specific by drawing two distinctions. The first distinction is between an account of the differences between synonyms insofar as they constitute part of the stylistic or 'expressive' (cf. Ullmann, 1964: 100-102) potential of a language and an account of the actual employment and manipulation of this potential. Our concern is mainly with the former, while the latter is to be found in manuals of rhetoric (e.g. Brooks & Warren, 1970) and stylistic analysis (e.g. Ullmann, 1964).

Within an account of synonyms as stylistic potential, there is the further distinction between the description of differences between individual synonyms and the classification of such differences into types according to the kind of choice they make possible. We shall not be concerned with the former task, which falls within the province of lexicographers and, more particularly, synonymists. It is the classification of types of difference between synonyms that constitutes the concern of the present study.

The study of synonymy to be pursued in this chapter, it will have become clear, is a stylistic one. To put this study into perspective as regards its place within the whole study of synonymy, it is worth referring to Ullmann, who sees the study of synonyms as "an important borderline province between semantics, stylistics, and lexicography" (1957: 113). We may leave the lexicographic aspect out of account. Of the remaining two, a semantic study of synonymy may be seen to consist in the establishment of criteria of synonymy as an act of explication, while a stylistic study of synonymy may be seen to consist in the discovery of communicatively relevant differences between synonyms. One might say that the stylistic study of synonymy begins where the semantic study of synonymy leaves off.

To put the stylistic study of synonymy into perspective as regards its place within the whole domain of stylistics, let us refer to Ullmann again. According to Ullmann:

Stylistics is usually regarded as a special division of linguistics; since, however, it has a point of view which is peculiar to it and distinguishes it from all other branches of linguistic study, it would perhaps be more logical to regard it as a sister science concerned not with the elements of language as such, but with their expressive potential. On this reading, stylistics will have the same

subdivisions as linguistics. If one accepts the view that there are three distinct levels of linguistic analysis: phonological, lexical and syntactical, then stylistic analysis will have to distinguish between the same three levels (1964: 111).

In this way we have 'stylistics of the sound', 'stylistics of the word' and 'stylistics of the sentence'. Of these, 'stylistics of the word'

will explore the expressive resources available in the vocabulary of a language; it will investigate the stylistic implications of such phenomena as word-formation, synonymy, ambiguity, or the contrast between vague and precise, abstract and concrete, rare and common terms ... (Ullmann, 1964: 111).

It will thus be seen that the stylistic study of synonymy is part of the 'stylistics of the word', with clear connections and overlaps with other phenomena that come under this subdivision of stylistics.

We are now in a position to begin our study proper by first providing a general rationale and descriptive framework.

11.2. General rationale and descriptive framework

Our starting point is what may be called the 'choice-situation', which consists in the presence of two or more synonyms. Choice-situations are context-bound. Thus the synonyms which make up one choice-situation need not occur together in, or be the only items which occur in, another choice-situation.

Whenever there is a choice-situation, the question arises as to whether there is judged to be a material choice between the synonyms, i.e. whether any one word is judged to be preferable to its one or more synonyms. Since this is a yes-no question, it obviously has two possible answers.

The first possible answer is that there is judged to be no material choice between the synonyms. Such an answer does not mean that there is no difference between the synonyms: it only means that what difference there may be is not communicatively relevant. A difference between synonyms in a choice-situation is communicatively relevant if and only if it gives rise to a material choice in that choice-situation. Nor does a negative answer mean that any

difference which is not communicatively relevant in this choice-situation cannot be communicatively relevant in another choice-situation. Communicative relevance is a function of the interaction between a particular difference and the context (in the widest sense) in which the choice-situation in question arises. How and why this is so will be explained later.

We now come to the second possible answer, where there is a material choice between the synonyms. Behind every material choice there must be, by definition, one or more communicatively relevant differences. In the event of an affirmative answer, there naturally arises the further question as to the ground(s) on which one word is judged to be preferable to its one or more synonyms. To provide the ground(s) is to identify the communicatively relevant difference(s).

Our concern is thus with types (or dimensions) of potentially communicatively relevant differences between synonyms. A difference is potentially communicatively relevant if it can be shown to be communicatively relevant in at least one choice-situation. All the potentially communicatively relevant differences together make up the stylistic potential in the domain of synonymy.

A choice-situation may be 'simple' or 'complex'. A simple choice-situation is one which is made up of two synonyms, while a complex choice-situation is one which is made up of more than two synonyms. In fact, strictly speaking, in the case of a complex choice-situation the two questions we have raised above must be posed and answered for each simple choice-situation to which the complex choice-situation is reducible. On the basis of the individual answers thus obtained it will then be possible to arrive at a general picture. In order that the general picture will be meaningful, consistency of judgement must be insisted upon, whereby, for example, if A has been judged to be preferable to B by a speaker, S, and B has been judged to be preferable to C by S or there has been judged to be no material choice between B and C by S, then A must be judged to be preferable to C by S. In this way not only will the most preferable synonym be unequivocally identified, but there may well also emerge a hierarchy of preferences. Where there is a material choice, the underlying communicatively relevant differences between the two synonyms will have been identified in a specific answer to the second question.

Now that it has been shown how any complex choice-situation can be handled via its component simple choice-situations, it will be sufficient, as well as methodologically desirable, to work with simple choice-situations alone - all the more so since we are concerned with types of potential difference between synonyms and not with their actualization in particular choice-situations. This is the practice that we shall adopt for the most part in what follows.

Roughly speaking, a ground for preferring one synonym to another belongs to one of two kinds. On the one hand, it may consist in what may be called a 'lexical property', or 'stylistic value', of the preferred synonym. On the other hand, a ground may be attributable to what may be called an 'extraneous factor' - extraneous, that is, to the preferred synonym in particular and to the choice-situation as a whole.

The lexical properties of a word (or, for us, a synonym) are whatever attributes, other than descriptive meaning, may be ascribed to the word independently of context, though, as we shall see later, not always independently of explicit comparison with another word. As such, a lexical property is something potential, and, as far as synonyms are concerned, it will become actualized or communicatively relevant only when it helps to differentiate between the two synonyms in such a way as to give rise to a material choice between them. By way of exemplification, we may cite the following terms from Nida (1975: 37), which all denote lexical properties: FORMAL, TECHNICAL, PEDANTIC, INFORMAL, COLLOQUIAL, INTIMATE, SLANG, VULGAR, ARCHAIC, OBSOLESCENT and REGIONAL. But of course dictionaries are the most natural place to look for terms denoting lexical properties. In CED (p.xiv), for example, can be found the following labels arranged under three different categories: usage labels - SLANG, INFORMAL, TABOO, FACETIOUS, IRONIC, EUPHEMISTIC, NOT STANDARD; connotative labels - DEROGATORY, OFFENSIVE; national and regional labels - AUSTRALIAN, BRITISH, SCOTTISH, etc. Whether precise or not, all of the above terms clearly denote lexical properties as we have defined them here. Thus when we say, for example, that a word is preferable to its synonym in a simple choice-situation because it is, say, INFORMAL or DEROGATORY or SCOTTISH (whereas its synonym, by implication, is not), the ground for our preference consists in a lexical property of the preferred synonym.

A ground for preferring one synonym to another consists in an extraneous factor if the preference is not directly, or necessarily, due to any lexical property of the two synonyms involved. Such will be the case, for example, when we prefer one synonym to another on the sole (pragmatic) ground that it is more likely to be known to our addressee than the other synonym (cf. Traugott & Pratt, 1980: 29-30). This assumed fact in relation to our addressee may, of course, in turn be attributable in the particular case in question to one or more lexical properties, but such a link is clearly contingent rather than necessary. The extraneous factor we have just seen at work is of a purely pragmatic character. Other extraneous factors, however, may also be of a stylistic or rhetorical character, as when we prefer one synonym to another on the sole ground (1) that it satisfies the need of lexical variation (cf. Nash, 1980: 48-53), or (2) that it satisfies the need of lexical reiteration (cf. Nash, 1980: 46-8), or (3) that its choice is dictated by a rhetorical scheme, such as recursion or inversion (cf. Nash, 1980: 82-3). Extraneous factors, as we have just seen, are of diverse kinds, but they all have in common the fact that they do not consist, or do not directly consist, in any lexical properties of the synonyms involved.

The distinction between lexical properties and extraneous factors is a useful one. For one thing, though this point does not bear on our present concerns, the distinction helps to delimit the range of admissible grounds on which (absolute) synonymy might be denied. Thus, while it is admissible to deny (absolute) synonymy by invoking potentially communicatively relevant lexical properties as differentiating between otherwise synonymous words, it is clearly inadmissible to deny (absolute) synonymy by invoking purely extraneous factors. From this point of view, then, lexical properties and extraneous factors belong to two sharply distinct categories and should not, as seems to have been done by Harris (1973: 13), be treated (whether invoked or dismissed as grounds for denying synonymy) on a par with each other. For our present purpose, the usefulness of the distinction lies in separating phenomena which form part of the lexico-stylistic resources of a language from matters which, strictly speaking, fall entirely within the realm of style and rhetoric. Having made this distinction, we shall

in the remainder of this section concentrate on lexical properties: not on their actual description, however, but on their general nature and mode of behaviour.

Lexical properties can be grouped into dimensions according to the kind of contrasts they represent. Every dimension is made up of two or more contrasting lexical properties. For example, as we shall see later, the dimension of 'regional dialect' consists of REGIONAL and NEUTRAL (i.e. NON-REGIONAL); the dimension of 'tone' consists of HIGHLY FORMAL, FORMAL, BARELY FORMAL, BARELY INFORMAL, INFORMAL, and VERY INFORMAL; the dimension of 'politeness' consists of EUPHEMISTIC and NEUTRAL (i.e. NON-EUPHEMISTIC); and the dimension of 'attitude' consists of FAVOURABLE, UNFAVOURABLE and NEUTRAL (i.e. NEITHER-FAVOURABLE-NOR-UNFAVOURABLE). Now every word possesses one, but only one, lexical property on each dimension. On the dimension of 'regional dialect', for example, every word must be either REGIONAL or NEUTRAL, and cannot be both. Similarly, on the dimension of 'tone', every word must be HIGHLY FORMAL, FORMAL, BARELY FORMAL, BARELY INFORMAL, INFORMAL, or VERY INFORMAL, but cannot have two or more of these lexical properties simultaneously. It follows that every word has as many lexical properties as there are dimensions and that all words have the same number of lexical properties.

The fact that words have a plurality of lexical properties, with the number being the same, affords a basis for measuring what may be called the stylistic distance between synonyms (in a choice-situation). Other things being equal, the fewer the dimensions on which two synonyms differ, the smaller will be the stylistic distance between them. When there is no material choice between two synonyms, there is, by implication, no dimension on which the two synonyms differ in a way that is communicatively relevant in the choice-situation. Conversely, when there is a material choice between two synonyms, we must infer the existence of at least one such dimension, assuming that extraneous factors have been ruled out. The discovery of the one or more such dimensions and of the relevant properties along that dimension or those dimensions will then provide the rational ground(s) for our intuitive preference.

I introduced the qualification of 'other things being equal' because there are two other relevant measures of the stylistic

distance between synonyms. One is what may be called the salience of the differentiating lexical properties. Here we may think in terms of a scale ranging from the most salient lexical properties, which are always or almost always actualized (e.g. regional dialect properties), to the least salient lexical properties, which are very seldom actualized and then only in special contexts (e.g. differences in phonetic or graphetic qualities). Thus, other things being equal, the less salient the differentiating lexical properties, the smaller the stylistic distance between two synonyms. The other measure is the distance between two differentiating lexical properties on a dimension where the dimension in question consists of more than two lexical properties which are not equidistant from each other. For example, two words will be stylistically closer on the dimension of 'tone' if their difference lies in the contrast of HIGHLY FORMAL/FORMAL than if their difference lies in the contrast of HIGHLY FORMAL/BARELY FORMAL, and closer still than if their difference lies in the contrast of HIGHLY FORMAL/INFORMAL, and so on. Thus, other things being equal, the stylistic distance between two synonyms may also be said to be smaller, the closer together their differentiating lexical properties lie along the same dimension.

The fact that all synonyms have a plurality of lexical properties may, furthermore, give rise to conflicting preferences. But if there is judged to be a material choice between two synonyms one synonym must eventually be preferred to the other. Such a situation occurs whenever of the desired lexical properties in a choice-situation one or more are found only in one synonym and one or more are found only in the other synonym. Hence the need for compromise by opting for the more important lexical property or properties at the expense of the less important one(s) in the light of context. There are also situations in which accuracy of descriptive meaning has to be sacrificed in favour of one or more strongly desired lexical properties, as has been pointed out by Baldinger:

It often happens that the speaker, for stylistic reasons, prefers a conceptually neighbouring word, for example volume for book (which are not synonymous on the conceptual level, since a book may have several volumes; ...). In such cases, stylistic selection is thought more important than the difference in sememes. Stylistic effect is preferred to communicative precision (1980: 252-3).

Such compromises, whether or not involving the sacrifice of descriptive accuracy, represent a pervasive feature of the choice of words, according to Ogden and Richards:

Most writing or speech then which is of the mixed or rhetorical kind as opposed to the pure, or scientific or strictly symbolic, use of words, will take its form as the result of compromise. Only occasionally will a symbolization be available which, without loss of its symbolic accuracy, is also suitable (to the author's attitude to his public), appropriate (to his referent), judicious (likely to produce the desired effects) and personal (indicative of the stability or instability of his references). The odds are very strongly against there being many symbols able to do so much. As a consequence in most speech some of these functions are sacrificed (1923: 234).

A dimension of lexical properties may consist either of a series of discrete 'steps', with each lexical property on it being one step (e.g. REGIONAL, NON-REGIONAL); or it may consist of a 'cline', with the lexical properties on it ranged from one end to the other (e.g. VERY FORMAL, FORMAL, BARELY FORMAL, BARELY INFORMAL, INFORMAL, VERY INFORMAL). It will perhaps be more accurate to say that any two lexical properties may be related as steps belonging to a dimension or they may be related as points on a cline belonging to a dimension; and that a dimension may display one kind of relation or the other or both.

In view of these two kinds of relation, a ground for preferring one synonym to another can be formulated in one or two ways, one 'absolute', the other 'comparative'. On the one hand, one synonym, A, may be preferred to another, B, because A possesses some lexical property, X (e.g. REGIONAL or NON-REGIONAL), which B does not. We may formulate such a ground, when the need arises, as: A is preferable to B because A is/does/has X (implying that B is not/does not/has not X). On the other hand, one synonym may be preferred to another because it possesses a higher degree of what may be regarded as a common lexical property than the other synonym does, as when A is VERY FORMAL and B is FORMAL. Here we have a choice of either using the first formulation or formulating the ground as: A is/does/has more X than B. There are cases where it may be difficult to decide which of the two relations is involved. However, where no such uncertainty exists, it seems to me desirable to maintain the distinction and to formulate the grounds accordingly, as the case may be.

Thus I regard the following grounds, advanced by Collinson (1939: 61-2), as inappropriately conceived and formulated:

- (1) "One term is more 'professional' than another; e.g. ... decease/death; domicile/house";
- (2) "One term is more local or dialectal than another, e.g. Scots flesher/butcher, or to feu/to let";
- (3) "One term is more colloquial than another, e.g. turn down/refuse".

For these grounds are liable to imply, misleadingly, that the second synonym is also (exclusively) PROFESSIONAL, (exclusively) LOCAL or DIALECTAL, and (exclusively) COLLOQUIAL respectively. It is possible to think of one sense in which these implications may be regarded as partially valid, namely, that the second synonym may occur in contexts which are professional, local or dialectal, and colloquial respectively, in addition to its ability to occur in contexts which are not any of these. However, when looked at from this point of view, the kind of facts in question will be much better captured by means of the distinction between marked and unmarked lexical properties.

Lexical properties may be either unmarked or marked. A lexical property is unmarked if it does not prevent the word to which it belongs from occurring equally appropriately in all contexts. We will amend this definition in an important respect later. Unmarked lexical properties are represented by NEUTRAL (plus a specification of the relevant dimension where necessary) or NON- followed by the contrasting marked lexical property or properties. A lexical property is marked if it restricts the range of situational applicability of the word to which it belongs. And it is marked to the extent that it imposes such a restriction. From the above it follows that unmarkedness is absolute while markedness is relative.

Given the distinction between marked and unmarked lexical properties, it is sufficient for the purpose of enumerating the lexical properties of a word to name only those that are marked.

In discussing varieties of meaning Hofmann distinguishes "structural from substructural meaning by whether (or not) a variety of meaning has a discrete structure & thus belongs to a system of the type studied in linguistics" (1976: 12). It seems that this distinction between the structural and the substructural applies also to dimensions of lexical properties: some dimensions are structural

while others are substructural. In other words, some dimensions are systems while others are not.

As to the exact nature of systems, Hofmann only mentions the presence of a discrete structure. For a more specific account we may turn to Berry (1975: 144-5), who has brought together three essential properties of (linguistic) systems, namely: (1) "the terms in a system are mutually exclusive", (2) "a system is finite" and (3) "the meaning of each term in a system depends on the meaning of the other terms in the system". These three properties will serve, in clear cases, to distinguish structural from substructural dimensions.

In the light of these three criteria of systems, we may cite the dimension of 'tone' as an example of structural dimensions, and the dimension of 'reflected meaning' as an example of substructural dimensions.

As far as structural dimensions are concerned, we may speak of 'structural stylistics' on an analogy with structural semantics. The analogy will become clear in the light of the following statement, by Lyons, of "one of the cardinal principles of 'structuralism'":

Every linguistic item has its 'place' in a system and its function, or value, derives from the relations which it contracts with other units in the system (1968: 443).

From this principle of structuralism have been derived structuralist theories of meaning (e.g. Lyons, 1963). On an analogy with structural semantics it is possible to develop a structural stylistics (of words, in our case). In structural semantics 'function' in the above quotation is to be construed as 'meaning'. In structural stylistics 'function' is to be construed as 'lexical property' or 'stylistic value'.

Furthermore, just as in structural semantics we can classify sense-relations into hyponymy, antonymy, complementarity, synonymy and so on, so in structural stylistics we may classify what may be called style-relations into various kinds according to the nature of the relations involved. Hence our dimensions of lexical properties, where each dimension may be regarded as a type of style-relation.

To pursue the analogy further, let us bring in the choice-situation, to which we may now give another name. Words which enter into meaning-relations with one another can be said to make up a

semantic field. By analogy, we may say that a set of synonyms, by entering into style-relations with one another, make up what may be called a stylistic field, which we have so far referred to as a choice-situation. But here the analogy ends.

We must now attach a more precise meaning to the idea of the lexical properties on a dimension as terms in a system. A lexical property of a word is not the function of the style-relations which that word contracts with its synonyms, if there be such, in a stylistic field. For all words, regardless of whether they have synonyms or not, have lexical properties, and have the same number of such properties. It is therefore wrong to assert, as Hofmann does, that "the use of *l* instead of another synonymous signe is what yields the information" (1976: 15), where by 'information' are meant "register and dialectal meanings" (1976: 14). Instead, a lexical property of a word derives (in the case of structural dimensions) from the type of situation in which the word occurs, that type of situation in turn deriving its value as a term in a system (of types of situation) (cf. Halliday, 1974: 33). It should also be noted that most lexical properties on substructural dimensions also derive from the contexts in which the words in question occur. There are of course exceptions, such as the reflected meaning of a sense and the shape and sound of a lexeme.

Let us pursue the nature of contextually-derived lexical properties a little further. Ullmann draws our attention to the source of such lexical properties when he says that what he calls 'evocative' devices

derive their stylistic effect not from any inherent quality but from being associated with a particular milieu or register of style (1964: 111).

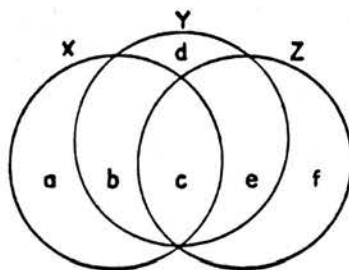
Thus we have situations on the one hand and words on the other, and the latter derive their lexical properties from the former. This relation is spelt out in a more explicit and systematic way by Crystal and Davy in outlining the aim of stylistics:

The aim of stulistics is to analyse language habits with the the main purpose of identifying, from the general mass of linguistic features common to English as used on every conceivable occasion, those features which are restricted to certain kinds of social context; to explain, where possible, why such features have been used, as opposed to other alternatives; and to classify these features into categories based upon a view of their function in the social context. By

'features' here, we mean any bit of speech or writing which a person can single out from the general flow of language and discuss - a particular word, part of a word, sequence of words, or way of uttering a word. A feature, when it is restricted in its occurrence to a limited number of social contexts, we shall call a stylistically significant or stylistically distinctive feature (1969: 10-11; cf. also Firth, 1935: 28; Traugott & Pratt, 1980: 116).

Once we see lexical properties as deriving from situations, we must reconcile this view with the fact that words with apparently incompatible lexical properties (e.g. FORMAL and INFORMAL) can occur in the same text and situation, and yet be distinguished as having such lexical properties. Two phenomena are involved here, and the reconciliation must accordingly be sought in two different ways.

In the first phenomenon, what happens is that two words can have overlapping or incorporating distribution with regard to situational restrictions. This phenomenon is represented in a schematic way in the following diagram from the American College Dictionary:



The three circles X, Y, Z, represent the three sets of language habits indicated above.

X—formal literary English, the words, the expressions, and the structures one finds in serious books.

Y—colloquial English, the words, expressions, and the structures of the informal but polite conversation of cultivated people.

Z—illiterate English, the words, the expressions, and the structures of the language of the uneducated.

b, c, and e represent the overlappings of the three types of English.

c—that which is common to all three: formal literary English, colloquial English, and illiterate English.

b—that which is common to both formal literary English and colloquial English.

e—that which is common to both colloquial English and illiterate English.

a, d, and f represent those portions of each type of English that are peculiar to that particular set of language habits.

By way of clarifying this diagram, Brooks and Warren have made the following observations:

Modern slang, for example, falls into segment e - and possibly d. It would be properly available for colloquial and informal writing. (But segment d and e, of course, include more than slang: they include colloquial terms of all kinds that do not occur in formal literary English.) Segment a includes the terms that occur only in formal literary English, but the overlap of formal literary English with colloquial and illiterate English is large -

so large that most of the words used in writing of the most formal style are to be found in writings at the other extreme of style (1970: 411-2).

We need not agree with the diagram or the accompanying observations by Brooks and Warren as regards detail, but we must agree with them as regards the general point about the overlapping and incorporating situational distribution of words. From this general point it is possible to derive the following observation, which will serve to reconcile the two apparently contradictory facts in question: two stylistically different words (including synonyms) derive their distinct lexical properties from their respective overall range of situational applicability. It follows that two words will differ in their lexical properties if they differ in their overall range of situational applicability. And it also follows that a difference in the lexical properties of two words is not incompatible with the presence of an overlap in their overall range of situational applicability: hence the possibility for two words to occur in the same text and situation and yet to be distinguished as having different lexical properties.

By way of introducing the second phenomenon, let us quote Crystal and Davy, and Halliday and Hasan on the notion of consistency of style or register:

We make the assumption that the text is homogeneous, and we therefore expect the stylistic features to show a consistent function (Crystal & Davy, 1969: 86).

The concept of COHESION can therefore be usefully supplemented by that of REGISTER, since the two together effectively define a TEXT. A text is a passage of discourse which is coherent in these two regards: it is coherent with respect to the context of situation, and therefore consistent in register; and it is coherent with respect to itself, and therefore cohesive. Neither of these conditions is sufficient without the other, nor does the one by necessity entail the other. Just as one can construct passages which seem to hang together in the situational-semantic sense, but fail as texts because they lack cohesion, so also one can construct passages which are beautifully cohesive but which fail as texts because they lack consistency of register - there is no continuity of meaning in relation to the situation. The hearer, or reader, reacts to both of these things in his judgement of texture (Halliday & Hasan, 1976: 23).

Now as far as the first phenomenon is concerned, the consistency of style of a text is not disturbed by the co-occurrence of words with overlapping or incorporating stylistic distribution. What

differentiates the second phenomenon from the first is that here we find within the same text and situation words which seem to have (normally) complementary stylistic distribution, so that the consistency of style of the text is (somewhat) disturbed. The co-occurrence of (normally) situationally incompatible words, however, need not always render a text inappropriate, for, as Nash points out,

In sensitive writing the vocabulary is in a constant play of tonal adjustments, here lifting into abstraction, there lowering towards the concrete and particular, now focusing attention on some learned word, now exploiting the warmth and intimacy of simple everyday speech (1980: 153).

Thus, on the one hand, we have seen that Crystal and Davy, and Halliday and Hasan insist on the consistency of style, while on the other hand we have seen that Nash observes that consistency of style need not be strictly observed in the appropriate use of language. There is, I think, some truth in both positions. In fact, in the same work from which the earlier quotation is taken Nash strikes the following balance between the two positions:

Usually there are a few indices in stylistic company, and it is from the interplay of compatible features that we derive an impression of tone and a sense of what is tonally correct. ... The tolerances within a single sentence are of course very strict. They relax a little as a text grows, - necessarily, or it would be very difficult to make a shift of tone - but the writer still has to be careful about the rate of tonal change, the gradual discarding of some indices and the introduction of others (1980: 135-6).

To complement what Nash has to say, let us quote Leech, who strikes a balance between the two positions from a different angle:

The inhibiting power of conventions of role varies a great deal. The maximum degree of stringency applies to language used in religious and legal rites (for example, oath-taking). Here any divergence from the prescribed form of words annuls the form of social activity concerned. At the other extreme I would place literature: here (at least in modern times) virtually all conventions observed are those which the writer imposes of his own free-will (1966: 72).

The question now is: If words of (normally) complementary stylistic distribution can occur in the same text without making it inappropriate, how do we know that these words in fact are of (normally) complementary stylistic distribution, and how do we derive lexical properties from situations?

To provide an answer, we have to invoke the not very precise yet undoubtedly useful notion of 'usual environment'. As Ullmann puts it:

Many of our words owe their expressiveness and their emotive effect to the associations which they call forth. Terms peculiar to a given milieu or level of style will evoke their usual environment even when they occur in totally different contexts. Archaisms, foreign words, technical and dialect terms, vulgarisms and slang, will transport the reader into the stylistic climate to which they normally belong (1962: 133; cf. also Firth, 1935: 28 for the 'principle of relative frequency', which amounts to the same thing).

In theory, then, we may regard the fact of lexical properties deriving from situations and the fact of stylistically different (in the first phenomenon) or incompatible (in the second phenomenon) words occurring in the same text as having been reconciled. However, the very need to introduce the notion of 'usual environment' ought to serve as a warning against over-confidence in deriving lexical properties from situations and against the temptation to treat terms denoting lexical properties as more precise than they are capable of being. As Crystal and Davy have found:

The main procedural difficulty ... arises from the fact that linguistic features do not usually correlate in any neat one-for-one way with the situational variables in an extra-linguistic context. ... any piece of discourse contains a large number of features which are difficult to relate to specific variables in the original extra-linguistic context, even though they may be felt to have some kind stylistic value (1969: 62).

This frequent lack of definite correlation, which may be either inherent or due to difficulty of observation, needs to be constantly borne in mind. Nevertheless, within these limitations, we must try to be as precise as we can. In so doing, however, we will find it necessary and, with due warning, justifiable to adopt an approach which is somewhat more rigid than is strictly warranted by the nature of the inquiry.

It will be remembered that an unmarked lexical property is one which does not prevent the word to which it belongs from occurring equally appropriately in all situations. We may now introduce the notion of 'common-core' (or stylistically neutral) words. A word is common-core if all its lexical properties are unmarked. Given that a common-core word only has unmarked lexical properties and that unmarked lexical properties impose no restrictions on the range of situational applicability of the words to which they belong, it follows that a common-core word is capable of occurring equally appropriately in all situations.

Now if we adhere strictly to this consequence, it will in turn have the strange consequence that a word cannot be common-core if it is a member of a stylistic field. It will be easy to see how this further consequence arises if we compare a common-core word, A, with a word, B, which we would regard as common-core but for its being a member of a stylistic field. Now, since A has no competing stylistic synonyms, it will of necessity be equally appropriate in all situations. The same cannot be said, however, of B, which, let us say, shares a stylistic field with two synonyms, C and D, of which the former is FORMAL and the latter INFORMAL. For in such situations as require FORMAL and INFORMAL words respectively the availability of C and D will render B less appropriate than in other situations; in fact, the availability of C and D may even, though this need not happen, render B inappropriate in the two former types of situation. To generalize, a word will not be as appropriate - the limiting case being that it is inappropriate - in a type of situation when it has a stylistic synonym whose use is restricted to, and which is therefore particularly appropriate in, this type of situation as when it does not have such a stylistic synonym.

Applying what has been said in the last paragraph to lexical properties, we may say that a lexical property cannot be unmarked if it belongs to a word which has a stylistic synonym with a contrasting lexical property on the same dimension. For an otherwise unmarked lexical property of a word will make the word less appropriate in a 'marked' situation if the word has a synonym with a marked lexical property deriving from that situation than if the word has no such synonym.

In the last two paragraphs, then, we have noted two consequences concerning the nature of common-core words and the nature of unmarked lexical properties respectively. I have drawn attention to these consequences for two reasons.

In the first place, I wanted to show the need to amend our original definition of unmarked lexical properties in the light of those consequences. Despite the first consequence, the fact remains that a large number of words with stylistic synonyms approximate to the status of common-core words as we have defined them so far and differ radically from other words. Despite the second consequence, the fact remains that a large number of lexical properties

approximate to the status of unmarked lexical properties as we have defined them so far and differ radically from other lexical properties. This being the case, we have either to introduce new categories for such words and lexical properties or to amend our original definition of unmarked lexical properties in order to accommodate them. I think that the second measure will be more satisfactory, not only because it will be easier to take, but also because it leaves room for an observation together with which it can capture the relevant facts more clearly than if the first measure had been taken. This observation is in fact the second reason for my drawing attention to the two consequences, and I will come to it presently. In the meantime, let us amend our original definition of unmarked lexical properties by omitting 'equally' and replacing 'all' with 'most', so that it now stands as follows: A lexical property is unmarked if it does not prevent the word to which it belongs from occurring appropriately in most situations. Given this new definition, the two consequences which we noted earlier cease to apply.

Let us turn to the second reason. We said earlier that a lexical property (of the kind in question) of a word derives not from the style-relations which that word enters into with its synonyms (where they are available) in a stylistic field, but from the type of situation in which the word occurs. While still holding this view to be true, I want now to make the equally important observation - which is made all the more necessary by our amended definition of unmarked lexical properties - that the exact relation between a lexical property of a word and the type of situation in which the word occurs may be affected by whether the word is a member of a stylistic field. Thus, an unmarked lexical property of a word will, strictly speaking, make the word somewhat less appropriate in a certain type of situation if the word has a synonym with a marked lexical property deriving from that situation than if the word has no such synonym. However, only in this limited sense is it correct to say that a lexical property of a word also derives (partially) from the style-relations which the word contracts with its synonym(s). Otherwise the presence of one or more synonyms alongside a word can only serve to underline, rather than define, one or more lexical properties of the word, which have already

derived from the occurrence of the word in situations.

We have already identified three levels of lexical unit on which synonymy may be located, i.e. lexeme, sense and occurrence. Just as synonymy may hold on any of these three levels, so lexical properties too may attach to lexemes, senses, or occurrences. It is thus important, in assigning lexical properties, to identify the right level of lexical unit to which they belong. In this we may be guided by the same principles as apply to the making of synonymy statements, i.e. the principle of descriptive adequacy and the principle of descriptive economy (cf. 4.5).

Lexical properties as such are potential: they may or may not be actualized in a given choice-situation. The likelihood of a lexical property being actualized is a function of what we have called the salience of the lexical property and the context in which the word with that property is being used.

As far as the role of context is concerned, most of the relevant factors boil down to the degree of care and attention which a person brings to his use of language in a particular context as a result, or partly as a result, of that context. In this regard, literature stands out as the most clear-cut example. It has been said, rightly or wrongly, that "there are no synonyms in literature because the set of conventions by which we designate and interpret literary works does not permit them" (Bogel, 1978: 135). Since there are undoubtedly words with exactly the same descriptive meaning, this statement, if true, must be taken to mean that any two otherwise synonymous words are necessarily differentiated by at least one actually communicatively relevant lexical property. This may be too sweeping a statement, but it would certainly be true to say, as a rough generalization, that lexical properties are more likely to be actualized in literature than in non-literature.

As far as the salience of lexical properties is concerned, we may, as we said earlier, think in terms of a scale ranging from the most salient lexical properties, which are always or almost always actualized (e.g. regional dialectal properties), to the least salient lexical properties, which are very seldom actualized and then only in special contexts (e.g. phonetic and graphetic properties).

11.3. Categories of dimensions

The dimensions of difference between synonyms may be seen as falling into several broad categories. These are

- (I) Dialectal varieties
- (II) Diatypic varieties
- (III) Emotive (or attitudinal) meaning
- (IV) Associations
- (V) Shape and sound
- (VI) Principles of style and rhetoric
- (VII) Pragmatic factors
- (VIII) Prescriptive judgements of correctness or appropriateness.

The nature and scope of the first two categories require little explanation. Both dialectal and diatypic varieties have been the subject of extensive stylistic investigation in recent years, and as to their nature and scope there is considerable agreement, as is witnessed in such treatments as Halliday et al (1964), Spencer and Gregory (1964), and Crystal and Davy (1969). It suffices at this point to say that we shall operate within the broad framework to be found in such treatments.

By (III) 'emotive meaning' we mean that aspect of words which is designated by such terms as 'favourable', 'unfavourable' or 'neutral' (cf. Lyons, 1981: 54; Palmer, 1976: 61). Here again, since our usage is in line with general practice, no more needs to be said at this stage.

What is meant by (IV) 'associations' is intuitively clear, yet in discussions of semantics and stylistics this has often become a vague and all-embracing term. Thus, all the three categories we have just considered have been casually referred to as 'associations'. In the present treatment I will give the term a much narrower interpretation, such that the (IV) category, 'associations', will be independent of and distinct from all the other categories in our classification. To narrow down the coverage of this category with regard to the first three categories, it is sufficient to observe that two synonyms may differ in the associations they evoke despite being of the same dialectal variety, and/or despite being of the same diatypic variety, and/or despite sharing the same emotive meaning. That the (IV) category is independent of and

distinct from the remaining categories will be too obvious to need demonstration.

By the next category, (V) 'shape and sound', I mean cases where A is judged to be preferable to B because of its phonetic or graphetic properties (e.g. phonaesthetic choices and eye-rhyme).

We come now to the (VI) category, 'principles of style and rhetoric'. Under this category come such devices as reiteration, variation, recursion and inversion. These we have already briefly considered earlier, though in a different connection.

In that same connection we also touched upon pragmatic factors that can give rise to a material choice between two synonyms, which now make up our (VII) category. It will be remembered that we cited as an example the situation in which we prefer one synonym to another on the sole ground that it is more likely to be known to our addressee(s) than the other synonym. Similarly, a purely pragmatic factor is at work when we 'prefer' one synonym to another for no other reason than that we are not sure of the pronunciation or spelling or grammatical properties (e.g. irregular verbs and nouns) of the latter synonym. From these examples it will be clear that pragmatic factors form a rather trivial category: we have drawn attention to them partly to clarify the whole picture and partly to exclude them from further consideration.

At this point it is helpful to remind ourselves of the distinction we drew earlier between lexical properties and extraneous factors as grounds for preferring one synonym to another. Of the categories in our classification the first five are to do with lexical properties, while the sixth and seventh are to do with extraneous factors.

In this respect the last category, (VIII), may be seen as belonging together with the first five. However, this category stands apart from all the other seven categories, in that it primarily involves somewhat prescriptive judgements. Prescriptive judgements of correctness or appropriateness are at work when we prefer one synonym to another on the sole ground that the latter synonym is incorrect or inappropriate either in our own judgement or, more probably, according to some higher 'authority' (e.g. Fowler (A Dictionary of Modern English Usage); Gowers, 1977). It is important to emphasize the word 'sole', for there are many cases where judge-

ments of correctness or appropriateness are based on inter-subjectively perceived lexical properties. In such cases whether or not a synonym is correct or appropriate is not a matter of prescriptive judgement but is a function of the relationship between the lexical properties of a synonym and the context in which it is being used. In the making of prescriptive judgements of correctness or appropriateness, on the other hand, no account is taken of the context other than as a means of helping to identify the meaning involved. It is for this reason that prescriptive judgements of correctness or appropriateness have been isolated as an independent and distinct category.

11.4. Enumeration, exemplification, and brief explanation of dimensions

There have been a number of classifications of the differences between synonyms (e.g. Baldinger, 1980: 241-53; Collinson, 1939: 61-2; Palmer, 1976: 60-3; Nash, 1980: 153). Of these the best-known is perhaps the one by Collinson while the most comprehensive is the one by Baldinger.

The enumeration that I will give in what follows is in large measure a bringing together and re-organizing of the dimensions already identified in the work alluded to, with a few additions that I have drawn from work not directly concerned with synonymy. The aim is to achieve at once a greater comprehensiveness (but something well short of exhaustiveness) of coverage and, through the classification of dimensions, what I hope will be greater clarity as regards the systematic relations between the dimensions.

In keeping with our general rationale and descriptive framework presented in 11.2, I will formulate each dimension in terms of a simple choice-situation between the two synonyms. Once formulated in this way, most of the dimensions are self-explanatory. Where this is not entirely the case, some explanation will be given, in most cases somewhat sparingly. Examples will be provided where this is considered essential and/or convenient.

(I) Dialectal varieties

(1) A is preferable to B because A is geographically unmarked or marked and, if markedness is desirable, because A belongs to a

particular local or national dialect. Examples:

small/wee (Scottish dialect); autumn (unmarked in English-speaking countries other than North America)/fall (North American).

(2) A is preferable to B because A is socially unmarked or marked and, if markedness is desirable, because A belongs to a particular social dialect.

A controversial distinction has been drawn between upper-class usage and that of the rest of society, which are designated as 'U' and 'non-U' respectively (cf. Ross, 1959). Here are some pairs of synonyms which, according to Ross (1959: 24-8), exemplify this bipartite distinction, the first word in each pair being the U word:

counterpane/coverlet; vegetables/greens; looking-glass/mirror; writing-paper/note-paper; wireless/radio; (table-) napkin/serviette; rich/wealthy; false teeth/dentures; spectacles/glasses; sick/ill (in the sense of "feeling nausea"); lunch/dinner; dinner/evening-meal; jam/preserve; pudding/sweet.

(3) A is preferable to B because A is typically used by people of a certain age group (e.g. young children, elderly people). A may also be preferred by an 'outsider', for reasons of 'empathy', in speaking to people in one of these age groups, as when a mother says to a child 'Where's your gee-gee (see below)?', or when a young person says to his grandmother 'Would you like me to fetch your wireless (see below), Granny?'. Examples:

gee-gee (baby language)/horse; wireless (chiefly used by elderly people)/radio.

(II) Diatypic varieties

(4) A is preferable to B because A is of a certain degree of formality of 'tone': VERY FORMAL, FORMAL, BARELY FORMAL, BARELY INFORMAL, INFORMAL, or VERY INFORMAL.

It is first of all necessary to clarify this notion of 'tone'. Our use of this notion is akin to the notion of 'tenor of discourse' or 'status' as it is sometimes conceived; not, however, as it is conceived by Crystal and Davy:

In this dimension we describe the systematic linguistic variations which correspond with variations in the relative social standing of the participants in any act of communication (1969: 73-4).

It is important to note that 'the relative social standing of the participants in any act of communication' is something permanent and does not change with the circumstances of communication. Thus

two participants will be friends whether they are communicating by speaking or by writing. Similarly, two participants will be boss and subordinate whether they are speaking to each other in their professional capacity or conversing in the relaxed atmosphere of a social occasion.

Such changes in the circumstances of communication, however, have a powerful effect on what I have referred to as the tone of our use of language. As a simple illustration, two friends will tend to be less formal in their use of language when they communicate orally than when they communicate in writing. By the same token, boss and subordinate will tend to be more formal in their use of language when they speak to each other in their professional capacity than when they converse in the relaxed atmosphere of a social occasion. Formality and informality are two of the shades of what I mean by 'tone'. Needless to say, 'the relative social standing of the participants' also plays an important part in determining the tone of their use of language.

Tone, then, is the product of both the 'relative social standing of the participants' and the actual circumstances of communication. The exact nature of these circumstances will be made clear later. In the meantime we may observe that our conception of tone is close to Catford's conception of 'style' (i.e. 'tenor of discourse') when he says:

By style we mean a variety which correlates with the number and nature of the addressees and the performer's relationship to them (1965: 90; cf. also Spencer & Gregory, 1964: 88-9).

Having clarified the notion of tone, we must next address ourselves to the question: How many degrees of formality of tone are there? To be more precise, how many degrees of situational formality is the vocabulary of English capable of manifesting?

It should be emphasized that our concern is not with degrees of situational formality as they are reflected in linguistic features as a whole, but only with degrees of situational formality as they are reflected in the vocabulary. With regard to the former, it may well be true that "the stylistic range of English is wide and ultimately the gradations are infinite" (Quirk, 1968: 246) or that "this dimension is unlikely ever to yield clearly defined, discrete registers" (Halliday et al, 1964: 92-3). Neither of these observations, however, need be true with regard to the vocabulary. Whether

(and to what extent) these observations are in fact true we will see in the course of the discussion to follow.

As the basis of my inquiry, I will make what I consider to be a reasonable assumption, namely, that when confronted with two English words (lexemes, senses, or occurrences), native speakers will be able to decide, with a large measure of agreement, whether one word is more formal than the other or whether both words are of (roughly) the same degree of formality. It would be easy to put this assumption to the test, and it would be worth doing so in a study more firmly based on experimentation than the present one. In the present study, however, I shall simply accept this assumption.

Once we accept this assumption, we will automatically have at our disposal a means of determining how many degrees of formality there are for the vocabulary of English. For a scale of formality can be easily produced by having a cross-section of native speakers make 'same in formality' and 'different in formality' judgements on a representative range of data. This, again, is a procedure which would be worth putting into practice in an experimental study. Not having been able to carry out such a study, I must stress the hypothetical nature of what I have to say on this matter.

On the basis of some informal experimentation on the lines suggested above, I will put forward the hypothesis that there are (roughly) six degrees of formality for the vocabulary of English. These are exemplified by sets of synonyms on the next page.

It will be noticed that, in addition to being of a high or fairly high degree of formality, some of the items in the table also possess other lexical properties. According to Leech (1974: 17), for example, 'domicile' is also OFFICIAL, 'abode' and 'steed' are also POETIC, and 'cast' is also LITERARY and BIBLICAL. This suggests some measure of dependence or interdependence in the relation between the dimension of 'tone' and other dimensions of diatypic variation. We will come back to this question later. In the meantime it suffices to point out that items with such lexical properties as imply a certain degree of formality should not, strictly speaking, be placed on the scale of formality.

It would be fairly simple and straightforward to test the validity of a 'formality table' such as this one. First, we check horizontally to see whether each item is indeed more formal than every

VERY FORMAL	FORMAL	BARELY FORMAL	BARELY INFORMAL	INFORMAL	VERY INFORMAL
domicile abode	residence	home			
diminutive		small		tiny wee	
steed		horse			nag
cast		throw		chuck	bung
	become		get		
	occur	happen			
	gentleman	man		chap fellow	guy
	pass away	die			pop off
	decline	refuse	turn down		
	fatigued	exhausted	tired out worn out	tuckered out	beat pooped
advise	acquaint	inform	tell		
	advert	refer			
	ameliorate	improve	better		
	assist	help			
	commence	begin	start		
	evince manifest display	show			
	purchase	buy			
	render	make			
	require	need			
reside		live			
	state	say			
	sufficient	enough			
	terminate	end			
		discover	find out		
		meet	come across		
	fabricate	invent	make up		
malefactor		criminal	crook		

item to its right. Next, we check vertically to see whether all the items within a column are indeed of the same degree of formality. I am far from claiming that all the examples in the above table will stand up to such a test, not least because the items are not contextualized, and consequently it is impossible to make the important distinction between lexemes, senses and occurrences. Nor do I claim that each of the six degrees of formality is internally homogeneous in the sense that no further degrees can be identified within it by means of more delicate 'different in formality' judgements. All I claim, as a hypothesis, is that six degrees of formality can be distinguished such that all the items coming under one degree are closer to each other in formality than they are to items coming under another degree of formality. I shall now proceed on the basis of this hypothesis, taking some comfort in the belief that the essence of what I have to say will not be seriously affected if the hypothesis proves false.

Having distinguished six degrees of formality, we have yet to provide a characterization for each by specifying its situational correlate. This is because the setting up of a scale of formality can proceed independently of any characterization of the degrees on it and does not even imply the possibility of carrying out such a characterization. As we have seen, it is possible to establish a scale of formality by relying on 'same in formality' and 'different in formality' judgements alone. Such judgements by native speakers, insofar as they are valid, derive, of course, from their experience of the use of words in situations. In fact, this is the only reason why we attach any value to such judgements. Two factors, however, combine to make it extremely difficult to move in the opposite direction, from 'same in formality' and 'different in formality' judgements to the exact circumstances of communication that have given rise to these judgements in the first place; and it is on the possibility of making just this move that the characterization of each degree of formality depends.

57 The first factor is simple, namely, that language activity is creative, both in an artistic and in a mundane sense, and is not invariably subject to hard and fast rules. This is perhaps particularly true as regards the correlation between linguistic features and situations. As a result, we can only speak in terms of

likelihood when matching degrees of formality with their situational correlates.

The second factor is more important and concerns the very nature of our undertaking. To put it simply, situational categories are not given to us, but are abstracted from infinite contexts by means of classification. If so, then something of the same uncertainty and lack of total precision must of necessity attach to situational categories as is acknowledged to be the case with the sense-meanings in dictionaries, which are obtained through essentially the same process (cf. Firth, 1935: 28; Ekvist, 1964: 56).

There is yet a third factor, which makes the characterization of degrees of formality more complex by militating against uniform characterizations. We have assumed that, when given any two English words, native speakers will generally agree whether one word is more formal than the other or whether the two words share (roughly) the same degree of formality. It must now be stressed that to make this assumption is very different from assuming that (even educated) native speakers will find themselves in agreement (in terms of judgements or actual performance) as to the situations in which these words occur or should occur. As Mackin and Cowie have reminded us in the Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English (p.lix), "the conventions observed by individual speakers and writers differ very considerably". To take full account of such differences would be very difficult and would add enormously to the complexity of the resulting characterizations. To idealize them away, on the other hand, could lead to one-sidedness and even distortion. In what follows, I choose to run the second risk more than the first, in the hope that the results will serve as the basis for further inquiry.

Within, and mindful of, the limitations imposed by the three factors just mentioned, let us now see how far we can go in supplying clear and valid characterizations for the six degrees of formality. For this purpose I will proceed in two stages.

The first stage is designed to specify the permissible range of use for words with different degrees of formality. To do this, I will invoke, within 'modes of discourse', the crude distinction between speaking and writing. In terms of this distinction, the six degrees of formality may be roughly characterized as follows:

- (a) VERY FORMAL words are ones which native speakers almost never use in speaking and normally hesitate to use even in writing.

- (b) FORMAL words are ones which native speakers normally hesitate to use in speaking.
- (c) BARELY FORMAL words are ones which native speakers normally do not hesitate to use either in speaking or in writing.
- (d) BARELY INFORMAL words are ones which native speakers normally do not hesitate to use either in speaking or in writing (note that this is exactly the same as (c)).
- (e) INFORMAL words are ones which native speakers normally hesitate to use in writing.
- (f) VERY INFORMAL words are ones which native speakers almost never use in writing and normally hesitate to use even in speaking.

There are three points to be made about the characterizations just given. First, it will have been seen that BARELY FORMAL and BARELY INFORMAL words are the only ones that normally occur in both speaking and writing. These are thus the unmarked lexical properties on this dimension.

The second point concerns VERY FORMAL and VERY INFORMAL words, which we find situated at the two poles of the scale. We have already remarked in their respective characterizations that such words are not normally employed either in speaking or in writing. To say this is, of course, to say that they are not normally used at all. To quote Gregory and Carroll:

Most of us could not even attempt to use with flair the most informal of the points on the personal-tenor cline. On the other hand most of us could not master formal degrees either as exemplified by the fine points of an old-style grammarian or diction specialist. We tend generally to operate in the middle ranges (1978: 55).

The middle ranges, according to our scale, are made up of four degrees of formality, with BARELY FORMAL and BARELY INFORMAL words as the ones with which native speakers are most at home.

We come now to the third and final point, which is also to do with VERY FORMAL and VERY INFORMAL words. As the examples in our table suggest, words with the lexical property VERY FORMAL tend to possess another lexical property, such as OFFICIAL or POETIC, which implies VERY FORMAL. Similarly, as the examples in the extreme right column of the table suggest, words with the lexical property VERY INFORMAL tend also to possess the lexical property SLANG, which seems to imply the former. Now we may distinguish three points of view from which slang may be considered, namely, range of intelligibility, provenance, and degree of formality. The first

point of view does not concern us, except that we are interested only in those slang words and expressions which have come into common use and which should perhaps therefore be regarded as part of standard English. In fact, such words and expressions are, strictly speaking, no longer slang other than in terms of provenance (which ought not be a defining feature). As far as we are concerned, the provenance of such words and expressions is relevant only as an explanation of their informality. It is thus only from the third point of view that slang properly enters into our consideration. However, when regarded from this point of view alone, the term 'slang' denotes nothing more than the lexical property VERY INFORMAL. In the light of these observations, it is perhaps not surprising that VERY FORMAL and VERY INFORMAL words are not normally used at all. A more interesting point, however, is that, if the first observation is true (i.e. that VERY FORMAL always implies one of a number of other lexical properties more specific than itself), then we should perhaps, strictly speaking, do away with VERY FORMAL, with the result that there will be five degrees of formality rather than six. Until this observation can be firmly established, however, it will be advisable to retain VERY FORMAL on our scale.

Although the distinction between speaking and writing is crude and needs elaborating (at the second stage), I believe it is a useful for our purpose, at least as a starting-point. It is clearly not enough, however, to invoke this distinction alone. To appreciate this, it will be helpful to keep speaking and writing clearly apart. Where there are stylistic synonyms within the first-level area of speaking or writing, we have yet to characterize the two or three degrees of formality permissible in each by specifying their more exact situational correlates. It is for this purpose that the second stage is designed. At this second stage VERY FORMAL and VERY INFORMAL will be left out of account, since they have already been completely covered by the first stage.

I will consider writing first. Within this first-level area I will now draw a second-level distinction between what may be called 'impersonal writing' and 'personal writing'. By impersonal writing is roughly meant writing in which the addresser takes or displays no personal interest in his addressee(s). Examples of such writing are essays, official correspondence, and leading articles in

newspapers. In straightforward contrast with impersonal writing is personal writing, in which the addresser does take or display some personal interest in his addressee(s). Examples of this latter kind of writing are personal correspondence (perhaps the best example) and children's stories.

In the light of this second-level distinction, FORMAL words may be distinguished from BARELY FORMAL and BARELY INFORMAL words as follows:

- (g) FORMAL words are ones which native speakers normally hesitate to use in personal writing.
- (h) BARELY FORMAL and BARELY INFORMAL words are ones which native speakers normally do not hesitate to use either in personal or in impersonal writing.

Turning now to speaking, we may draw, within this other first-level area, a similar second-level distinction between what may be called 'serious speaking' and 'casual speaking'. To characterize these two types of speaking, it is helpful to invoke Halliday's (1970: 141-4) typology of the functions of language. Thus serious speaking is speaking where the ideational function is dominant, while casual speaking is speaking where the interpersonal function is dominant. We may also remark that the ideational/interpersonal distinction is also relevant to the characterization of the two types of writing: the interpersonal function plays a larger part in personal writing than in impersonal writing, where its role is minimal. To come back to speaking, we are now in a position to distinguish INFORMAL words from BARELY FORMAL and BARELY INFORMAL words. Thus:

- (i) INFORMAL words are ones which native speakers normally hesitate to use in serious speaking.
- (j) BARELY FORMAL and BARELY INFORMAL words are ones which native speakers normally do not hesitate to use either in serious speaking or in casual speaking.

In connection with the four new characterizations, three points need to be made.

First, from (g) and (h) it can be inferred that within impersonal writing there may again be a stylistic choice between FORMAL and BARELY FORMAL/BARELY INFORMAL words. Similarly, it can be inferred from (i) and (j) that within casual speaking there may be a stylistic choice between INFORMAL words and BARELY FORMAL/BARELY INFORMAL words. I have not been able to discover any clear and

general constraints operating on such choice in either case. In the case of impersonal writing, I must be content instead with the comparative statement that, for the same addresser, the more impersonal the addresser/addressee relationship, the more likely the addresser is to use FORMAL words, and vice versa. In the case of casual speaking, I must be content with a similar comparative statement, that, for the same addresser, the more casual the occasion the more likely the addresser is to use INFORMAL words, and vice versa.

Second, as regards (h) and (j), it must be mentioned that to say that the stylistic range BARELY FORMAL/BARELY INFORMAL words incorporates that of FORMAL words on the one hand and that of INFORMAL words on the other is not to say that the former are invariably equally felicitous as their FORMAL or INFORMAL synonyms from the point of view of 'tone'. At work here are the general observations which we made in 11.2 about the relationship between unmarked lexical properties and the presence of stylistic synonyms.

Thirdly, as is clear from (c), (d), (h) and (j), the two central degrees of formality, i.e. BARELY FORMAL and BARELY INFORMAL, have received exactly the same characterization. To prove that these indeed represent two different degrees of formality, we must show that they have different situational correlates. This is not easy to do, for BARELY FORMAL and BARELY INFORMAL are closer to each other than the former is to its neighbouring degree FORMAL or the latter is to its neighbouring degree INFORMAL. Here again we may consider writing and speaking separately. With regard to writing, it seems that where there is a choice between a BARELY FORMAL word and a BARELY INFORMAL word the former is more likely to be favoured in impersonal writing. It is doubtful that BARELY INFORMAL words are more likely to be favoured than BARELY FORMAL words in personal writing. We may nevertheless say with some confidence that they are more likely to be chosen in personal writing than they themselves are in impersonal writing. Something of the converse applies to speaking. Here it seems that where there is a choice between a BARELY INFORMAL and a BARELY FORMAL word the former is more likely to be favoured in casual speaking. As to serious speaking, regardless of their chances of being chosen as against each other, it is fairly certain that the (absolute) chances of BARELY FORMAL words occurring increase as we move from casual speaking to serious speaking.

(5) A is preferable to B because A is LEARNED or POPULAR.

Closely related to yet distinct from the dimension of 'tone' is what might be called the dimension of 'learning'.

Formality of tone, as we have seen, is a gradable notion, capable of no less than six degrees according to our hypothesis. Unlike the dimension of 'tone', the dimension of 'learning' as we conceive it allows for no degrees, but consists of a simple polar opposition: LEARNED versus POPULAR.

LEARNED may be characterized as a lexical property belonging to those words that are normally used only by people who are supposed to be learned or well-read. There is the implication that most native speakers either do not have words with this lexical property in their (active) vocabulary or will hesitate to use them even in writing (for fear of appearing pretentious or pedantic).

Words with the lexical property POPULAR make up the complementary set. However, subject to the same qualifications as apply to the dimension of 'tone', POPULAR words are unmarked, in the sense that they are normally used by all speakers regardless of whether they are supposed to be learned.

The connection of this dimension with the dimension of 'tone' is obvious. Short of perceiving mutual entailment, we may see the connection as follows:

VERY FORMAL	FORMAL	BARELY FORMAL	BARELY INFORMAL	INFORMAL	VERY INFORMAL
LEARNED		POPULAR			

It is not easy to exemplify the lexical property LEARNED. While intersubjectively valid to a certain degree, this is not a very definite lexical property. Nor is it an important one, and part of my purpose of identifying it is so that other lexical properties will not be confused with it. As for exemplification, I will content myself with citing two examples from Nash and Baldinger (though not from English) respectively:

The writer may opt for a word of learned status, e.g.: malefactor (directly modelled from Latin), or he may look for a more familiar equivalent, e.g.: criminal (Latin mediated through French) (Nash, 1980: 152).

Ger. Telephon (foreign + pop)/Fernsprecher (learned + native)
"telephone" (Baldinger, 1980: 235).

(6) A is preferable to B because A is FAMILIAR or UNUSUAL.

To be distinguished from both of the above dimensions is the

dimension of 'currency' or 'familiarity'. This dimension is very simple and concerns only the frequency with which a word occurs.

'Currency' is clearly a gradable notion. It is neither feasible nor useful, however, to distinguish a finite number of degrees. Instead, we may for practical purposes treat this dimension as if it consisted of a polar opposition: FAMILIAR versus UNUSUAL.

Though distinct, this dimension bears a close relation to the two earlier dimensions, particularly the dimension of 'tone'. This relation may be roughly represented as follows:

VERY FORMAL	FORMAL	BARELY FORMAL	BARELY INFORMAL	INFORMAL	VERY INFORMAL
LEARNED		POPULAR			
UNUSUAL		FAMILIAR			UNUSUAL

The polar distinction of FAMILIAR and UNUSUAL is useful as far as it goes. It is often necessary, however, particularly within the range of broadly FAMILIAR words, to make use of comparative statements, i.e. to say that one word is more FAMILIAR or UNUSUAL than a stylistic synonym (cf. Brewer, 1975: 460 for 'naturalness').

So far we have talked about the relative frequency of words as such, without qualifications. To make the notion of currency more useful for stylistic purposes, three qualifications must be introduced. First, frequency of use is context-bound: what is FAMILIAR in one type of context may be UNUSUAL in another. Secondly, frequency of use is bound to lexical units: a FAMILIAR lexeme may have an UNUSUAL sense, and a FAMILIAR sense may have an UNUSUAL occurrence, and vice versa. Thirdly, frequency of use is bound to individual speakers: what is FAMILIAR for one speaker or group of speakers may be UNUSUAL for another speaker or group of speakers.

Let us now consider together three further dimensions.

- (7) A is preferable to B because A is POETIC (or NEUTRAL).
- (8) A is preferable to B because A is LITERARY (or NEUTRAL).
- (9) A is preferable to B because A is ARCHAIC/POETIC (or NEUTRAL).

LITERARY, POETIC and ARCHAIC are commonly employed for labelling words, and yet they seem to defy precise characterization. In fact, their meanings are more often taken for granted than spelt out. In what follows I can do no more than offer some clarification.

The need for clarification arises largely as a result of three inconsistencies in the way these terms are employed. To begin with, the three terms are sometimes regarded as on a par with each other,

as in OALDCE. In contrast, they have also been conceived in such a way that LITERARY subsumes POETIC and ARCHAIC, as when Ullmann says that "literary terms may be divided into poetic, archaic, and others" (1962: 143; cf. also Collinson, 1939: 61). If we follow the first practice, all three terms play indispensable roles. If we follow the second practice instead, however, LITERARY serves only as a cover-term and, as such, is not essential.

The second inconsistency lies in the way the three terms are applied to actual words. To take only POETIC, the second items in each of the following pairs, for example, have been treated by Traugott and Pratt as POETIC:

We can find pairs of synonyms illustrating the contrast between neutral and poetic forms, such as incessant/unceasing, branch/bough, girl/maiden, sleep/slumber, room/chamber, problems/woes or cares, and a great many others (1980: 117).

Of these, 'unceasing', 'bough', 'chamber' and 'cares' are not labelled in OALDCE; 'maiden' and 'slumber' are labelled as LITERARY; and only 'woes' is labelled POETIC.

There is yet another inconsistency, to do with the way in which the term LITERARY is employed. A clear example is provided by Chafe. Commenting on the difference between "a. The road widened", "b. The road became wider" and "c. The road got wider", Chafe says:

It seems to me that in normal, uninhibited, colloquial conversation I would hardly ever use either (31a) or (31b), but only (31c). Conversely, in writing, unless I were quoting a colloquial conversation, I would not normally use (31c). That is, the difference between (31a,b) on the one hand and (31c) on the other is simply the difference between what might be called literary and non-literary style (1971: 137).

It is clear that Chafe is using LITERARY to mean something like FORMAL, which is not the sense in which the term has been used either in OALDCE or by Ullmann.

Having drawn attention to the pitfalls, we must now begin the job of clarification.

To begin with, there is a useful distinction to be drawn between POETIC and LITERARY. It will be recalled that 'woes' and 'unceasing' are both given by Traugott and Pratt as examples of POETIC words. Now between these two words can be seen a fairly clear stylistic difference. In the first place, 'woes' has a strong 'poetic flavour' while 'unceasing' is somewhat detached from poetic

contexts. In the second place, though neither word is wholly exclusive to poetry, 'woes' is more restricted than 'unceasing' in its stylistic range outside poetry.

It will not do, however, simply to banish words like 'unceasing' from the range of POETIC words if there is no other term to accommodate them. For, though less POETIC than 'woes', 'unceasing' is definitely more than just FORMAL: it is associated with 'elegant' literary composition in general. To capture such difference as is exemplified by these two words, there is a lot to be said for retaining LITERARY (for words like 'unceasing') alongside POETIC.

In the final analysis, however, there is no hard and fast line between POETIC and LITERARY. These two lexical properties belong to a dimension which is a continuum rather than a series of discrete steps and on which any cut-off point must therefore be somewhat arbitrary. Despite a measure of arbitrariness, the distinction between POETIC and LITERARY nevertheless plays a useful role in indicating the different stylistic ranges of two closely related sets of words, particularly where the distinction is relatively clear, as in the case of 'woes' and 'unceasing'.

Closely related yet to be distinguished from POETIC (as conceived here) is the lexical property ARCHAIC. To adopt the definition in SOED, archaic words are those which "belong to an earlier period, though still retained by individuals, or for special purposes, poetical, liturgical, etc" (p.99). From this definition it can be inferred that the relation between POETIC words and ARCHAIC words is one of overlap: only some POETIC words are also ARCHAIC, and only some ARCHAIC words are also POETIC. If so, the juxtaposition of POETIC and ARCHAIC is not vacuous. POETIC words as such, we have seen, are not exclusive to poetry. In contrast, from a purely synchronic point of view, POETIC words which are also ARCHAIC (hence ARCHAIC/POETIC) are more likely to be exclusive to poetry.

(10) A is preferable to B because of its etymology.

It is a well-known fact that synonyms often differ in their etymological origin. In this respect, two 'scales' have been identified by Ullmann as follows:

The double scale - 'Saxon' versus 'Latin', as it is usually called. ... There are in English countless pairs of synonyms where a native term is opposed to one borrowed

from French, Latin or Greek. In most cases the native word is more spontaneous, more informal and unpretentious, whereas the foreign one often has a learned, abstract or even an abstruse air. There may also be emotive differences: the 'Saxon' term is apt to be warmer and homelier than its foreign counterpart. ... There are many exceptions to this pattern; yet it recurs so persistently that it is obviously fundamental to the structure of the language. ...

It will be sufficient to quote a few examples of this synonymic pattern. All major parts of speech are involved in the process: adjectives:

bodily	corporeal
brotherly	fraternal
heavenly	celestial
idle	otiose
inner	internal (interior)
learned	erudite
lying	mendacious
sharp	acute
sooty	fuliginous
starry	sidereal

verbs:

answer	reply
buy	purchase
read	peruse
tire (weary)	fatigue

nouns:

fiddle	violin
friendship	amity
help	aid
player	actor
wire	telegram
wireless	radio
world	universe

The ease with which examples can be multiplied shows how all-pervasive this pattern is in English (1962: 145-6).

Side by side with this main pattern there exists in English a subsidiary one based on a triple scale of synonyms: native, French, and Latin or Greek:

begin (start)	commence	initiate
end	finish	conclude
food	nourishment	nutrition
kingly	royal	regal
rise	mount	ascend
time	age	epoch

In most of these combinations, the native synonym is the simplest and most ordinary of the three terms, the Latin or Greek one is learned, abstract, with an air of cold and impersonal precision, whereas the French one stands between the two extremes (1962: 147-8).

Conspicuous in Ullmann's account is the regular correspondence

between etymological origins and lexical properties. Such a correspondence is not doubt useful, for those who are versed in etymology, in providing clues to and explanations for lexical properties. But in the final analysis, particularly in view of the exceptions to the two scales, it is the lexical properties rather than the etymological origins that are generally synchronically relevant.

For our purpose, historical provenance is an independent dimension only to the extent that it might be synchronically relevant. It will be synchronically relevant only to the extent that it affects native speakers' choice of words in its own right - that is, over and above its role in providing clues or explanations concerning other lexical properties. The extent in question must be very small indeed.

(11) A is preferable to B because A is semantically opaque (i.e. difficult to grasp?) or transparent (i.e. easy to grasp?).

This is a real yet somewhat elusive dimension, of which Nash has given the following account:

Though most classical words should nowadays be no more 'difficult' than words of Anglo-Saxon origin, they tend to keep a certain mystery, for all but the accomplished classicist. Thus a word like ingenuous has an opacity which is in itself a tonal value, as compared with the transparent simplicity of words like forthright, or frank. The density of the classical word can be a barrier, sometimes deliberately raised, between writer and reader; or possibly a form of stylistic test (1980: 153).

(12) A is preferable to B because it is motivated or not motivated and, if motivated, is so in a particular way.

Here is a brief account by Baldinger:

The motivation of compound or derived words. For example, two German words for "pavement", Trottoir and Gehweg, are synonymous (absolute synonyms on the level of the substance of content). But they are not synonymous as far as their motivation is concerned. For any German speaker, Gehweg is easy to analyze (gehen "go", and Weg "way"); Trottoir, on the other hand, is not (being a French loan-word). The speaker may prefer a motivated compound or derivative over its non-motivated synonym (whether this is a simple word or a compound or derived word from a diachronic viewpoint), which has lost its motivation because of phonetic evolution or other diachronic factors (such as loan-words, for example). The scientific analysis of these compounds is performed (1) in the level of the form of expression and (2) on the level of the form of content (1980: 223-4).

Examples may also be supplied from English, such as

unilateral/one-sided (disarmament); transparent/see-through (blouse); collapsible/knock-down (furniture); arduous/uphill (struggle).

As these examples show, this dimension has obvious connections with certain others dealt with above.

(13) A is preferable to B because A is TECHNICAL (or NEUTRAL).

By TECHNICAL words I mean all those that are restricted to a greater or lesser degree to use by people belonging to a specialized profession or occupation. Examples:

death/decease; house/domicile; bruise/contusion; opening/aperture; dry/desiccate; false teeth/artificial dentures; milk teeth/deciduous dentition.

(14) A is preferable to B because A is or is not EUPHEMISTIC.

Examples:

toilet/bathroom; homosexual/gay; die/pass away; drunk/stoned; insanity/mental disorder; rat-catcher/rodent officer; slaughterhouse/abattoir; strike/industrial action.

(15) A is preferable to B because A is or is not FIGURATIVE.

Figurativeness is obviously a matter of degree. By FIGURATIVE senses here are meant all 'extended' senses such that the senses from which they were derived are still part of the synchronic system of English and that the link between the more basic sense and the extended sense is still obvious. There is an obvious connection between this dimension and the dimension of 'reflected meaning', which we will come to presently. Examples, where the second item in each pair is FIGURATIVE:

dishonest/crooked; reckless/blind; beginning/dawn, threshold; stupid/dense, thick; result/fruit; depend/hinge; invent/coin (a word); reflect/mirror; excel/shine; desire/thirst (for knowledge); uncontrolled/unbridled; difficult/uphill; means/vehicle, conceal/veil; inexperienced/green; addicted/hooked; imitate/ape; search/comb.

(16) A is preferable to B because A is or is not HUMOROUS (or FACETIOUS).

Examples; where the second item is HUMOROUS:

head/pear; die/kick the bucket.

(III) Emotive (or attitudinal) meaning

(17) A is preferable to B because A is FAVOURABLE, UNFAVOURABLE, or NEUTRAL.

(a) Examples where descriptive meaning remains the same (?):

policeman (NEUTRAL)/fuzz (UNFAVOURABLE); cherub (FAVOURABLE)/child (NEUTRAL)/brat (UNFAVOURABLE).

(b) Examples where descriptive meaning undergoes some change:

prudent (FAVOURABLE)/cowardly (UNFAVOURABLE); brave (FAVOURABLE)/foolhardy (UNFAVOURABLE); statesman (FAVOURABLE)/politician (NEUTRAL or UNFAVOURABLE); thrifty (FAVOURABLE)/economical (NEUTRAL)/stingy (UNFAVOURABLE); liberty (FAVOURABLE or NEUTRAL)/license (UNFAVOURABLE).

(IV) Associations

(18) A is preferable to B because A has or does not have certain associations owing to its reflected meaning.

In Leech's words:

Reflected meaning is the meaning which arises in cases of multiple conceptual meaning, when one sense of a word forms part of our response to another sense (1974: 19).

There is a difference of view as regards the extent to which one sense of a lexeme can be 'reflected' onto another sense. Thus, in Bennett's view, "it seems likely ... that reflected meaning is only carried over from a more concrete sense to a less concrete sense" (1968: 167). It seems to be suggested by Baldinger, however, that any sense of a lexeme can be reflected onto any other sense of the same lexeme, when he says:

Two monemes (lexemes or morphemes) which have two or more meanings are never absolutely synonymous, although one may use them with the same meaning (or one of the meanings) that they have in common, because the other meanings are still potentially present (1980: 220).

Both views, I think, are partly true. This will become clear as soon as we make the following distinction. On the one hand, there is the reflection of one sense upon another as a subconscious motivation on the part of the addresser or a subconscious response on the part of the addressee. On the other hand, there is the conscious manipulation of what Baldinger calls the 'samasiological field' of a word or the conscious response to such manipulation.

When reflected meaning is conceived in the first way, Bennett is likely to be correct, though I think that the salience of a sense is more relevant than its concreteness and that the reflected sense need not be more salient (or concrete) than the reflecting sense as long as the former is salient (or concrete) to the necessary extent (cf. Leech, 1974: 19).

When reflected meaning is conceived in the second way, Baldinger is undoubtedly right. However, the conscious manipulation of and response to potential reflected meaning is a rare phenomenon. As Leech says:

Only in poetry, which invites a heightened sensitivity to language in all respects, do we find reflected meaning operating in less obviously favourable circumstances (1974: 19).

Reflected meaning may be desirable and actively sought, or it may be undesirable and consciously avoided. Here is an example of the former situation from Leech:

Are limbs, so dear-achieved, are sides
Full-nerved - still warm - too hard to stir?

In these lines from Futility, a poem on a dead soldier, Wilfred Owen overtly uses the word dear in the sense of 'expensive(ly)', but also alludes, one feels in the context of the poem, to the sense 'beloved' (1974: 19).

The following examples of the latter situation also come from Leech:

The case where reflected meaning intrudes through sheer strength of emotive suggestion is most strikingly illustrated by words which have a taboo meaning. Since their popularization in senses connected with the physiology of sex, it has become increasingly difficult to use terms like intercourse, ejaculation, and erection in 'innocent' senses without conjuring up their sexual associations (1974: 19).

(19) A is preferable to B because A has or does not have certain associations owing to its formal identity (homonym) with or similarity to another lexeme, whose meaning, and perhaps even associations, will thus be evoked.

If we stretch the definition of reflected meaning a little, we are in a way still dealing with reflected meaning, though here we move beyond the boundaries of individual lexemes or semasiological fields. In the present case, associations are still the result of meaning 'reflected' from an identifiable source. The difference is that the source is not another sense of the same lexeme, but a lexeme identical or similar in form or sound regardless of its word-class, i.e. a (near) homonym or homophone. Arising from this difference is the probable further difference that the associations caused in these ways tend to be weaker than reflected meaning proper, particularly under the first conception.

To illustrate associations as a result of formal identity with a hypothetical example, it is possible to conceive a context in which 'sound' is preferred to 'good' in 'give somebody a _____ beating' because of its formal identity with 'sound' meaning "that which is or can be heard".

In fact, punning depends on such associations. Thus, a plausible contextualization of the above example would be: 'I know John's

father gave him a sound beating, because I could hear it from the next room'.

(20) A is preferable to B because A has or does not have certain associations owing to contexts in which it has occurred.

Associations of this type come largely under what Hofmann refers to as 'experiential meaning':

The experiential meaning of a word is the experiences that a person has had in which the word has occurred. Depending on one's beliefs about neurology, it may be defined as all of the experiences that the individual has had or just the ones that he can recall that he has had (1976: 7; cf. also Winter, 1969: 481-2).

Thus a person may prefer one synonym to another because it has been used on one or more occasions of special significance for him.

However, this is a marginal dimension, since experiential meaning is not intersubjective and is not accessible to the addressee. To the extent that experiential meaning is intersubjective, it becomes subsumed under other categories, such as diatypic varieties or emotive meaning.

(V) Shape and sound

(21) A is preferable to B because it has certain aesthetic effects owing to its phonetic or graphetic features, or because it fits a particular phonetic or graphetic pattern, e.g. rhyme, alliteration, eye-rhyme (cf. Baldinger, 1980: 224; Nash, 1980: 87-8; Ullmann, 1962: 129-30; 1964: 111).

(22) A is preferable to B because it fits a particular pattern of intonation or rhythm, e.g. metre (cf. Baldinger, 1980: 226; Nash, 1980: 81 & 88; Ullmann, 1964: 103).

(23) A is preferable to B because of its length.

For example,

This sort of language is no doubt pardonable in headlines where as many stimulating words as possible must be crowded into spaces so small that treaties have had to become pacts; ambassadors, envoys; investigations, probes; and all forms of human enterprise, bids (Gowers, 1977: 138).

(VI) Principles of style and rhetoric

(24) A is preferable to A because it fits a pattern of lexical reiteration (cf. Nash, 1980: 46-8).

(25) A is preferable to B because it fits a pattern of lexical variation (cf. Nash, 1980: 48-53; Ullmann, 1962: 152).

(26) A is preferable to B because it fits a rhetorical scheme, i.e.

recursion, inversion (cf. Nash, 1980: 82-3).

(VII) Pragmatic factors, e.g.

(27) A is preferable to B because it is or is not believed to be known to the addressee(s).

(VIII) Prescriptive judgements of correctness or appropriateness

(28) A is preferable to B because it is judged by the speaker himself, or is known by the speaker to be judged by some higher 'authority', to be the correct or appropriate word to use.

Here are two examples from Gowers:

The use of alternative for such words as other, new, revised or fresh is rife. Perhaps this is due to infection spread by the cliché alternative accommodation.

The Minister regrets that he will not be able to hold the Conference arranged for the 15th March. Members will be informed as soon as alternative arrangements have been made.

Alternative must imply a choice between two or more things. Other is the right word here (1977: 145).

The proper meaning of to claim is to demand recognition of a right. But the fight to prevent it from usurping the place of assert has been lost in America and seems likely to be lost here also, especially as the BBC have surrendered without a struggle. Here are some recent examples from this country:

The police took statements from about forty people who claimed that they had seen the gunmen in different parts of the city.

The Statement Department claims that discrimination is being shown against the American film industry.

...

The enlargement of claim ought to be deplored by all those who like to treat words as tools of precision, and to keep their edges sharp. Why should claim, which has its own useful job to do, claim a job that is already being efficiently done by others? Perhaps the idea underlying this usage is that the writer claims credence for an improbable or unverified assertion (1977: 147).

Our concern in this chapter has been with differences between synonyms. If we now attach equal weight, as we did earlier, to the fact that words can function synonymously despite their differences, there emerge two complementary functions which synonyms can serve in everyday communication. They add flexibility to the language by enabling its users to express the same meaning by different means. At the same time, they add variety and expressiveness to the language by enabling its users to exercise stylistic choices

in conveying the same meaning. It is these two complementary functions that make synonymy an interesting and important phenomenon in everyday communication, and it is an awareness of the importance of synonymy that has motivated the present study.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

To bring this study to a close, here is a chapter-by-chapter summary of what I have done.

Chapter 1

It has long been a matter of controversy whether synonymy exists in natural language. To clarify the issues involved I have drawn an explicit distinction between the a priori and the a posteriori approach to synonymy. This distinction, I believe, throws new light on the controversy and points the way, if not to a resolution of the controversy, at least to a basis on which scholars may agree to differ where there is a conflict of purpose. For my part I have argued, as far as linguistic semantics is concerned, in favour of the a posteriori approach, whereby synonymy is treated as an empirical phenomenon which it is the task of linguistic semantics to explicate.

Chapter 2

I have, for the purpose of explicating synonymy in the remaining chapters of Part One, divided the question of what synonymy is into a number of component questions with the aid of ^a simple formula. These questions are of no novelty, but I have recast them and brought them together in what I hope is a more explicit and more systematic way. This conscious 'divide and rule' procedure has the double advantage of focusing our attention more closely on questions which may otherwise be neglected and of enabling us to identify the locus of controversies more precisely.

Chapter 3

This chapter is concerned with the question: On what level(s) of lexical unit is synonymy a meaning-relation? I have (1) identified three levels of lexical unit, (2) uncovered a number of difficulties and unjustifiable assumptions which apply to existing conceptions of sense-synonymy, (3) argued against treating lexeme-synonymy or sense-synonymy as the sole legitimate levels of synonymy, and (4) defended occurrence-synonymy as a third such legitimate level.

Chapter 4

This chapter, complementary to the last one, is concerned with the question of what is the best way of stating instances of synonymy. I have tried, in particular, to find a way of making sense-synonymy statements which avoid those difficulties which, as we have found in Chapter 3, vitiate existing conceptions of sense-synonymy. The proposed solution consists in (a) conceiving sense-synonymy statements as the merging of occurrence-synonymy statements, (b) treating sense-synonymy statements as a 'tool' for achieving descriptive economy, to be used where applicable, and (c) placing constraints on sense-synonymy statements to ensure their adequacy.

Chapter 5

I have (1) concluded from the previous chapters that what remains to be done (except one thing) as regards the explication of synonymy is to establish criteria of occurrence-synonymy, (2) laid down certain preconditions which such criteria have to satisfy to count as adequate, and (3) sharply distinguished interchangeability and sameness of meaning as two separate criteria of synonymy and given to each what I see as its due weight.

Chapter 6

This chapter is concerned with establishing the synonymy criterion of interchangeability. I have (1) drawn attention to the dependence of interchangeability on acceptability, (2) distinguished various types of acceptability, (3) established a criterion of interchangeability in terms of the types of acceptability it entails, and (4) acknowledged the difficulty of applying this criterion in practice by drawing attention to and analysing the indeterminacy of acceptability judgements.

Chapter 7

This chapter is concerned with establishing the synonymy criterion of sameness of meaning. I have (1) examined two accounts of bilateral implication, (2) identified two fundamental respects in which they differ both in conception and as regards their consequences, (3) established a criterion of sameness of meaning by choosing between the two sets of alternatives, (4) discussed, by way of defending the alternatives thus chosen, (a) the question of meaning versus reference and (b) degrees of sameness of meaning, and (5) completed the mechanism for deriving sense-synonymy and

lexeme-synonymy criteria from occurrence-synonymy criteria by eliminating 'recalcitrant' sentences.

Chapter 8

This chapter forms a transition from the explication of synonymy to its description. I have (1), by bringing together the consequences of certain conclusions reached in previous chapters, distinguished three types of synonyms and (2), in the light of this classification, identified three tasks in the description of synonymy.

Chapter 9

This chapter is concerned with accounting for the propria between otherwise synonymous senses. I have distinguished three types of propria, due respectively to grammatical, semantic and purely collocational unacceptability.

Chapter 10

This chapter complements the preceding one by seeking to account for the communis between otherwise non-synonymous senses. I have (1) supplied an explanation of such communis by distinguishing between potential and actual meaning and by subsequently treating actual meaning as a function of potential meaning interacting with sentence/context, and (2) defended potential and actual meaning against the contextualist and autonomist views of meaning respectively.

Chapter 11

This chapter is concerned with classifying and describing dimensions of communicatively relevant difference between synonyms. I have (1) provided a general rationale and descriptive framework for this purpose, (2) grouped the various dimensions into a number of categories, and (3) offered an inventory of the dimensions.

It only remains for me to express the hope that the sum total of these chapters, despite their tentativeness and many shortcomings, is a useful synthesis which, on the one hand, has clarified or shed fresh light on old questions and which, on the other hand, has raised and suggested answers to new ones.

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